



Criminal justice bill passes first test vote in Senate

By KEVIN FREKING

WASHINGTON (AP) — Legislation that would ease federal sentencing laws for some offenders cleared its first major test vote Monday, garnering overwhelming support in both parties even as some conservatives portrayed the bill as soft on crime.

The Senate voted 82-12 to advance the bill. A vote on final passage would come later in the week, but not until the chamber has debated and voted on a series of amendments from opponents that will be brought up Tuesday.

The bill would give judges more discretion when sentencing drug offenders and allow about 2,600 federal prisoners sentenced for crack cocaine offenses before August 2010 the opportunity to petition for a reduced penalty. The bill also encourages prisoners to participate in programs designed to reduce the risk of recidivism, with the reward being the accumulation of credits that can be used to gain an earlier release to a halfway house or home confinement to finish out their sentence.

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In this Dec. 11, 2018, file photo, President Donald Trump speaks during a meeting in the Oval Office of the White House, in Washington.

Associated Press



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Run-up to Flynn sentencing tinged with unexpected drama

By ERIC TUCKER and CHAD DAY

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Michael Flynn may have given extraordinary cooperation to prosecutors, but the run-up to his sentencing hearing Tuesday has exposed raw tensions over an FBI interview in which the former national security adviser lied about his Russian contacts.

Flynn's lawyers have suggested that investigators discouraged him from having an attorney present during the January 2017 interview and never informed him it was a crime to lie. Prosecutors shot back, "He does not need to be warned it is a crime to lie to federal agents to know the importance of



In this July 10, 2018, file photo, former Trump national security adviser Michael Flynn leaves the federal courthouse in Washington, following a status hearing.

Associated Press

telling them the truth."

The mere insinuation of underhanded tactics was startling given the seemingly productive relationship between the two

sides, and it was especially striking since prosecutors with special counsel Robert Mueller's office have praised Flynn's cooperation and recommended against prison time. The defense arguments spurred speculation that Flynn may be trying to get sympathy from President Donald Trump or may be playing to a judge known for a zero-tolerance view of government misconduct.

"It's an attempt, I think, to perhaps characterize Flynn as a victim or perhaps to make him look sympathetic in the eyes of a judge — and, at the same time, to portray the special counsel in a negative light," said former federal prosecutor Jimmy Gurule, a University of Notre Dame law school professor.

Until the dueling memos were filed last week, the sentencing hearing for Flynn — who pleaded guilty to lying about a conversation during the transition period with the then-Russian ambassador — was expected to be devoid of the drama characterizing other of Mueller's cases.

Prosecutors, for instance, have accused former Trump campaign chairman

Paul Manafort of lying to them even after he agreed to cooperate. Another potential target, Jerome Corsi, leaked draft court documents and accused Mueller's team of bullying him. And George Papadopoulos, a Trump campaign adviser recently released from a two-week prison sentence, has lambasted the investigation and publicly claimed that he was set up.

Flynn, by contrast, has been notably silent even as his supporters advocated a more combative stance. He met privately with investigators 19 times and provided cooperation so extensive that prosecutors said he was entitled to avoid prison altogether. Then came his sentencing memo.

Although Flynn and his attorneys stopped short of any direct accusations of wrongdoing, they took pains to note that Flynn, unlike other defendants in Mueller's investigation, was not informed that it was against the law to lie to the FBI. They suggest the FBI, which approached Flynn at the White House just days after Trump's inauguration, played to his desire to keep the encounter quiet by telling him the quickest way to get the interview done was for him to be alone with the agents — rather than involve lawyers.

They also insinuate that Flynn, of Middletown, Rhode Island, deserves credit for not publicly seizing on the fact that FBI officials involved in the investigation later came under scrutiny themselves. Former Deputy Director Andrew McCabe, who contacted Flynn to arrange the interview, was fired this year for what the Justice Department said was a lack of candor over

a news media leak. Peter Strzok, one of the two agents who interviewed Flynn, was removed from Mueller's team and later fired for trading anti-Trump texts with another FBI official.

Mueller's team has sharply pushed back at any suggestion that Flynn was duped, with prosecutors responding in their own sentencing memo Friday that there was no obligation to warn Flynn against lying.

"A sitting National Security (Adviser), former head of an intelligence agency, retired Lieutenant General, and 33-year veteran of the armed forces knows he should not lie to federal agents," prosecutors wrote. Former FBI Director James Comey criticized the broadsides on the Flynn investigation during a Monday appearance on Capitol Hill, saying, "They're up here attacking the FBI's investigation of a guy who pled guilty to lying to the FBI." Trump has made no secret that he sees Mueller's investigation as a "witch hunt" and has continued to lash out at prosecutors he sees as biased against him and those who help them. He's shown continued sympathy for Flynn, though, calling him a "great person" and asserting — erroneously — that the FBI has said he didn't lie.

Flynn has not tried to retract his guilty plea, and there's every indication the sentencing will proceed as scheduled.

Arun Rao, a former Justice Department prosecutor in Maryland, said the defense memo is striking because it's "inconsistent" with Flynn's cooperative stance so far. "You also wonder in this very unusual situation," he said, "whether it is a play for a pardon." □

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CRIMINAL JUSTICE BILL

Continued from Front

To win over wary senators, sponsors tweaked the bill to prevent those convicted of violent firearm offenses, sexual exploitation of children and high-level fentanyl and heroin dealing from participating in the supervised release program — but Senator Tom Cotton, R-Ark., and others want to expand that list.

Their amendment would add carjacking, bank robbery by force, felony sex crimes and other "felony crimes of violence" to the list of offenses that make a prisoner ineligible.

"Some of those crimes should not be eligible for that program," said Sen. Mike Rounds, R-S.D. "At this point, I'm probably a no unless they get that done." Cotton has been among the most vocal opponents of the legislation, saying: "If other senators want to vote for a bill that's going to let sex offenders and child pornographers and wife-beaters out of prison, that's their prerogative. That's between them and the voters in their state."

The bill has created a unique split in the GOP camp, while Democrats are overwhelmingly supportive.

Republican Sen. Mike Lee

of Utah, a former federal prosecutor, is among the bill's champions. He said he has been haunted by the words of a federal judge who sentenced a low-level drug offender carrying a gun to 55 years in prison, noting that murderers, rapists and terrorists could get less time for their offense. He said only Congress could fix the problem.

"Those comments have stayed with me ever since," Lee said.

The bill follows the lead of states such as Texas that have experienced a decrease in crime in recent years while keeping fewer people in prison. Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, said his home state has been able to close eight prisons since undertaking various prison reforms, such as investing in probation staffing and getting prisoners into drug treatment more quickly.

"This is not about being tough on crime, or soft on crime," Cornyn said. "This is about being smart on crime and getting the best results."

Supporters of the bill warn that amendments from Cotton and Sen. John Kennedy, R-La., could cause the compromise to unravel if the Senate approves any of them as early as Tuesday. A unique cross-section



In this Nov. 27, 2018, file photo, Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., speaks to reporters as he arrives for a meeting with fellow Republicans, on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

of liberal and conservative advocacy groups have rallied in support of the bill.

David Safavian, general counsel for the American Conservative Union, said the bill's critics ignore that offenders would be subject to strict oversight while completing their sentence at halfway houses or in home custody. The prisoners also have to show through objective criteria that they are a low risk to society before obtaining supervised release.

Under the current process,

nearly half of released federal prisoners are arrested again. "And every case of recidivism is another victim, is another crime, is another prosecution, is another trial, is another prison cell, all funded with taxpayer dollars," Safavian said. "I'm sorry, but there is nothing conservative about protecting a non-functioning prison bureaucracy."

If the legislation passes the Senate, the House is expected to approve it quickly. The House had earlier passed legislation that fo-

cused on boosting prisoner rehabilitation programs, but did not include changes to sentencing laws that critics say had led to overly harsh sentences for many nonviolent offenders, particularly African-Americans. The bill looked to have stalled a couple weeks ago, but supporters led by President Donald Trump and son-in-law Jared Kushner persuaded Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., to allow for the Senate vote before Congress adjourns. □

Comey says House Republicans are 'shameful' after interview

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and PADMANANDA RAMA
WASHINGTON (AP) —

Former FBI Director James Comey had harsh words for House Republicans on Monday, saying their silence in response to President Donald Trump's attacks on the Justice Department is "shameful."

Comey said Republicans "have to have the courage to stand up and speak the truth, not be cowed by mean tweets or fear of their

base."

He was on Capitol Hill for a second closed-door interview with two Republican-led committees investigating what they say was bias at the Justice Department before the 2016 presidential election. Republicans argue department officials conspired against Trump as they started an investigation into his ties to Russia and cleared Democrat Hillary Clinton in a separate probe of her email use.

Democrats have called the GOP investigation "nonsense."

Comey, who led both investigations, mocked the congressional probe, saying the questions were about "Hillary Clinton's emails and the Steele dossier" — two favorite subjects of Republicans who insist there was bias in the department. The dossier was Democratic-funded opposition research on Trump's ties to Russia compiled by

former British spy Christopher Steele.

"This while the president of the United States is lying about the FBI, attacking the FBI and attacking the rule of law in this country. How does that make any sense at all?" Comey asked.

Trump has repeatedly gone after the FBI for bias as his campaign has been under investigation. He has called special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation a "hoax." On Sun-

day, he called his former personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, a "rat" because he has cooperated with prosecutors.

Comey said Trump "is calling a witness who is cooperating with his own Justice Department a rat — say that again to yourself at home, and remind yourself where we have ended up." A transcript released after Comey's first interview showed a heavy focus on the Clinton email probe. □



AP Explains: What happens in a partial government shutdown

By **MATTHEW DALY**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As President Donald Trump and Congress bicker over Trump's call for \$5 billion to build a border wall with Mexico, government agencies are preparing for a partial government shutdown set to begin at midnight Friday.

In truth, the government won't really shut down. Many agencies, including the Pentagon and the departments of Veterans Affairs and Health and Human Services, are already funded for the year and will continue to operate as usual, regardless of whether Congress and the president reach agreement this week.

In all, about 75 percent of discretionary spending for the budget year that began Oct. 1 has already been approved by lawmakers and signed by Trump.

Still, the dispute could affect nine of 15 Cabinet-level departments and dozens of agencies, including the departments of Homeland Security, Transportation, Interior, Agriculture, State and Justice, as well as national parks and forests. More than 800,000 federal employees would see their jobs disrupted, including more than half who would be forced to continue working without pay.

The U.S. Postal Service, busy delivering packages for the holiday season, wouldn't be affected by any government shutdown because it's an independent agency.

WORK GOES ON

Social Security checks will still go out. Troops will remain at their posts. Doctors and hospitals will get their Medicare and Medicaid

reimbursements. In fact, virtually every essential government agency, like the FBI, the Border Patrol and

about 53,000 TSA workers, 54,000 Customs and Border Protection agents and officers and 42,000 Coast

collection of hundreds of thousands of tax returns and audits.

WHO WORKS — AND WHO



The Capitol is seen in Washington, Friday morning, Dec. 14, 2018, after Congress adjourned until next week.

Associated Press

the Coast Guard, will remain open. Transportation Security Administration officers will continue to man airport checkpoints. But hundreds of thousands of federal workers will be forced off the job, and some services will go dark. Even after funding is restored, the political repercussions could be enduring.

According to a report by Democrats on the Senate Appropriations Committee, more than 420,000 federal employees deemed essential would continue to work without pay during a partial shutdown, including about 41,000 law enforcement and corrections officers and nearly 150,000 Homeland Security employees. Those working without pay — three days before Christmas — would include

Guard employees. As many as 5,000 Forest Service firefighters and 3,600 National Weather Service employees also would continue working, with the expectation that they will be paid back in full once the government reopens. Meanwhile, more than 380,000 employees will be furloughed — including nearly all of NASA and Housing and Urban Development and 41,000 Commerce Department employees. About 16,000 National Park Service employees — 80 percent of the agency's workforce — would be furloughed, and many parks would close. Some parks already are closed for the winter. Among those set to be furloughed: 52,000 staffers at the Internal Revenue Service, slowing analysis and

DOESN'T

The rules for who works and who doesn't date back to the early 1980s and haven't been significantly modified since. The Trump administration is relying mostly on guidance left over from former President Barack Obama.

Under a precedent-setting memorandum by Reagan budget chief David Stockman, federal workers are exempted from furloughs if their jobs are national security-related or if they perform essential activities that "protect life and property." The air traffic control system, food inspection, Medicare, veterans' health care and many other essential government programs would run as usual. The Federal Emergency Management Agency could continue to respond to disasters.

On the other hand, the Washington Monument and many other iconic park service attractions would close, as would museums along the National Mall. In the past, the vast majority of national parks were closed to visitors and campers, but during the last government shutdown in January the Interior Department tried to make parks as accessible as possible despite bare-bones staffing levels. It was not clear Monday if that effort will be repeated.

Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, who greeted visitors at the World War II Memorial and other sites in downtown Washington during the last shutdown, said Saturday he is stepping down at the end of the year.

FEDERAL WORKERS STILL GET PAID — EVENTUALLY

While they can be kept on the job, federal workers can't get paid for days worked while there is a lapse in funding. In the past, however, they have been repaid retroactively even if they were ordered to stay home.

Rush hour in downtown Washington, meanwhile, becomes a breeze. Tens of thousands of federal workers are off the roads.

SHUTDOWNS HAPPEN

Way back in the day, shutdowns usually weren't that big a deal. They happened every year when Jimmy Carter was president, averaging 11 days each. During Reagan's two terms, there were six shutdowns, typically just one or two days apiece. Deals got cut. Everybody moved on. The government also shut for a few hours last February amid a partisan dispute over deficit spending. □



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Vatican urged to reveal status of ousted U.S. archbishop

By NICOLE WINFIELD and
AMY FORLITI

Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — A prominent U.S. archbishop is asking the Vatican for answers about the status of an investigation into alleged sexual misconduct by his predecessor, who was forced to resign in 2015.

St. Paul and Minneapolis Archbishop Bernard Hebda wrote a remarkable letter to his flock Friday in which he revealed he sent the Vatican in 2016 a new allegation of improprieties with minors against retired Archbishop John Nienstedt.

It was not immediately clear if the alleged incident in Germany was ever investigated. Nienstedt has denied the allegation.

County prosecutors informed Hebda of the allegation in 2016. It accused Nienstedt of inviting two minors to his hotel room in 2005 at a Vatican-organized youth rally in Germany to change out of wet clothes, the archbishop wrote.

Hebda said Nienstedt "then proceeded to undress in front of them and invited

them to do the same." He noted that Nienstedt denied the allegation.

Nienstedt resigned as archbishop after Minnesota prosecutors charged the Twin Cities archdiocese with failing to protect children from a predator priest who was later convicted of molesting two boys.

Nienstedt was one of the first U.S. bishops known to have been forced from office for botching sex abuse investigations. He also faced allegations of engaging in inappropriate sexual behavior with adults. He denied misconduct, and the archdiocese hired two law firms to investigate those claims in 2014, but the results were never made public.

Hebda said as far as he knew, the Vatican suspended the 2014 investigation when Nienstedt resigned in June 2015. He called for a resolution to that probe, and for information about the alleged World Youth Day incident, which he learned about after Nienstedt's resignation.

"My opinion is this allegation needs to be fully ad-

dressed before a definitive resolution of Archbishop Nienstedt's suitability for ministry can be made," Hebda wrote.

The Vatican didn't immediately respond to a request for comment Monday.

Nienstedt, who was bishop of New Ulm at the time of the alleged incident in Germany, denied the claim in a Monday email to The Associated Press.

"I welcome an investigation into this allegation, as I have welcomed all impartial investigations into allegations made against me. At the same time, I do deny the veracity of this allegation," he said. "That being said, I don't want to speak poorly of the men making these accusations."

Nienstedt said it's hard to defend himself because it's his word against the word of his accusers, "and, as much as they seem to want to discredit me, I don't want to harm them."

Nienstedt's case has taken on new relevance given the sex abuse scandal surrounding ex-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, the retired archbishop of Washington



In this photograph taken on Monday, Oct. 18, 2010, Archbishop John C. Nienstedt talks about the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis consolidation plan, which includes closing 21 churches, at his office in St. Paul, Minn.

Associated Press

now accused of sexual misconduct with both adult seminarians and at least one minor.

Hebda and Auxiliary Bishop Andrew Cozzens have held up both the McCarrick and the Nienstedt scandals as evidence of the need for a lay-led mechanism to review misconduct allegations against bishops, who are answerable only to the pope.

Hebda said he is doing what he can within his authority by forbidding Nienstedt from exercising public

ministry in his archdiocese. But he said Nienstedt's fate is ultimately in the Vatican's hands.

"The matter remains unresolved for the accusers, for Archbishop Nienstedt and for the public," he said. "I share the frustration that is felt by them."

The criminal charges against the archdiocese eventually were dismissed, but the archdiocese reached a civil settlement with authorities that was designed to increase oversight and transparency. □

Groups sue to block oil production in Alaska's Beaufort Sea

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — Five conservation groups filed a lawsuit Monday seeking to block oil production from a proposed artificial gravel island in federal Arctic waters.

The groups asked the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to review an offshore production plan approved for the Liberty project in the

Beaufort Sea off Alaska's north coast.

The groups said the plan violates federal law governing outer continental shelf drilling, the environment and endangered species. The Trump administration failed to consider impacts of an oil spill in remote Arctic waters or effects of drilling on polar bears and

other endangered species, said Kristen Monsell of the Center for Biological Diversity, one of the groups that sued.

"An oil spill in the Arctic would be impossible to clean up in a region already stressed by climate change," she said.

Drilling law requires the administration to reject

development if the risks to the human and marine environment outweigh the benefits of oil extraction. That includes both spills and climate change, Monsell said.

"Here the agency used the totally inadequate analysis that actually found that the 'no action' alternative — not approving the

project — would actually result in more greenhouse gas emissions, which is just completely ridiculous on its face, and also ridiculous given the modeling they used," Monsell said.

The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management did not immediately respond to an email request for comment Monday. □

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Deported immigrants get their last flight on 'ICE Air'

By **NOMAAN MERCHANT**
and **ANGELIKI KASTANIS**
Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — Shackled at their ankles and wrists and their shoelaces removed, a long line of men and women waited on the tarmac as a team of officers patted them down and checked inside their mouths for anything hidden.

Then one by one, they climbed a mobile staircase and onto a charter plane the size of a commercial aircraft.

This was a deportation flight run by ICE Air. The chains would be removed and the shoelaces returned when the plane landed in El Salvador.

An obscure division of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement operates hundreds of flights each year to remove immigrants. Deportation flights are big business: The U.S. government has spent approximately \$1 billion on them in the last decade, and the Trump administration is seeking to raise ICE's budget for charter flights by 30 percent.

ICE Air Operations transports detained immigrants between American cities and, for those with final removal orders, back to their home countries. About 100,000 people a year are deported on such flights.

While Mexican immigrants are generally flown to southern U.S. cities and then driven to the border so they can cross over, Central Americans have to be transported by air. And the large numbers of Mexicans who used to cross the border have largely been replaced by migrants from



In this Nov. 16, 2018, photo, immigrants who entered the United States illegally are deported on a flight to El Salvador by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement in Houston.

Associated Press

three impoverished Central American countries: El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras.

According to flight-tracking data, deportation flights to Guatemala and Honduras have sharply increased this year. And ICE's budget request for charter flights increased 30 percent last year compared to the year before.

The agency estimated last year that it spends about \$7,785 per hour on the flights.

ICE shifted to chartering private planes about a decade ago after previously using a government service with the U.S. Marshals. The agency says moving to private flights saves about \$25 million a year and gave it more flexibility. Charter flights also avoid putting large numbers of deported immigrants on commercial planes, which requires buying tickets for deportation officers accompany-

ing them, or holding them in the U.S. for longer than necessary and tying up space in detention centers. "I don't want to elongate anybody's detention with us," said Pat Contreras, director of enforcement and removal for ICE's Houston field office. "If a judge says you need to be removed, we should be expeditiously working to execute that order so that person does not spend any longer in detention than necessary."

But migrant advocacy groups say ICE Air is an example of how tougher immigration enforcement — from detention to tracking to removal — enriches private companies.

"The way you would save money on ICE Air is by deporting fewer people, not by privatizing the industry," said Bob Libal, director of Grassroots Leadership, which opposes immigration detention.

"ICE is a largely privatized

agency," Libal said. "In many ways, it's been captured by the industries that profit from deportation and detention."

The Associated Press observed a deportation flight being loaded last month at a private terminal of Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston.

The Boeing 737 had no markings suggesting it was a deportation flight. Instead, it had the insignia of Swift Air, a private company that also flies charters for political campaigns and professional sports teams, including the NHL's Boston Bruins and Chicago Blackhawks. In this case, Swift Air had been hired by Classic Air Charters, a Huntington, New York-based company that won ICE's deportation flights contract last year. Classic Air has been paid \$51 million this year by ICE, according to federal spending records. The previous contractor, CSI Avia-

tion of New Mexico, was paid \$906 million by ICE's removals division since 2010, when ICE privatized its flights.

When the plane landed in Houston, about 30 Salvadoran immigrants were already on board, flown in from Alexandria, Louisiana, an ICE Air hub. They peered out the windows as the plane sat on the tarmac.

Two buses arrived, carrying 45 men and five women. Their few belongings were in red mesh bags that workers sorted on the tarmac. Officers checked each detainee before letting them board, a process that took about 20 minutes.

According to the agency, 29 of the 50 people who boarded the plane in Houston had been arrested on criminal charges, including four who were wanted in El Salvador for attempted murder or homicide, the agency said.

The remaining 21 were considered non-criminal, meaning they were being deported for immigration violations. Twenty of the 50 had been deported before.

ICE would not let AP reporters view the inside of the plane, but officials said the flights are orderly and quiet. A meal is served, and a doctor is on board. But all detainees — even those considered non-criminal — remain shackled until the plane lands.

"We try and be as humane as we can with everything that we do," Contreras said. "We try to make them safe. We want to make sure that not one individual does anything wrong." □



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Federal court says N.Y. ban on nunchucks unconstitutional

By DEEPTI HAJELA
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A 1974 New York state ban on nunchucks that was put into place over fears that youth inspired by martial arts movies would create widespread mayhem is unconstitutional under the Second Amendment, a federal court has ruled. Judge Pamela Chen issued her ruling Friday in a Brooklyn federal court on the martial arts weapon made famous by Bruce Lee. The plaintiff, James Malo-

ney, started his legal quest after being charged with possession of nunchucks in his home in 2000. He initially filed a complaint in 2003, and appealed all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court when the case went against him. The Supreme Court in 2010 remanded the case back down to be reconsidered in light of a Second Amendment decision it had made in another case, and Maloney filed an amended complaint later that year. Maloney had been fo-

cused on getting the part of the law overturned that banned nunchucks, two rigid rods connected at one end by a chain or rope, even in private homes. In her ruling, Chen said the court couldn't simply take that part out, and ruled that the state's law as it pertained to possessing nunchucks as well as to manufacturing, transporting or disposing of them was in violation of the Second Amendment. The ruling went over the history of the ban, and said



In this April 6, 2017, file photo, objects confiscated from passengers' carry-on luggage, including nunchucks, bottom, are displayed at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport in SeaTac, Wash. Associated Press

it "arose out of a concern that, as a result of the rising popularity 'of 'Kung Fu' movies and shows,' various

circles of the state's youth' — including 'muggers and street gangs' — were 'widely' using nunchaku to cause

Statue of Liberty climber convicted in July 4 protest

By LARRY NEUMEISTER
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A woman who climbed the base of the Statue of Liberty on July 4 to protest the separation of families at the Mexican border was convicted Monday of misdemeanor charges by a judge who said a person's viewpoint can't be a factor in whether laws are enforced. The verdict by U.S. Magistrate Judge Gabriel W. Gorenstein came two hours after Therese Okoumou got choked up as she testified, saying images from the U.S.-Mexican border of children being torn from their parents gave her nightmares. She faces up to 18 months in prison at a March 5 sentencing on charges of trespassing, interference with an agency's function and

disorderly conduct. Ron Kuby, one of Okoumou's lawyers, told the judge that his client wanted a trial even though it was clear the "likelihood of her conviction today was close to 100 percent." In a courtroom packed with emotional Okoumou supporters, Gorenstein explained that his decision needed to be consistent whether it was Okoumou who climbed the statue or somebody with the exact opposite opinions. He noted that Okoumou repeatedly ignored orders to descend from a perch at the feet of the statue that was high enough that a prosecutor said it could have seriously injured or killed her or tourists below. New York Police Department rescuers were forced to climb a rickety ladder



Therese Okoumou, right, who climbed the base of the Statue of Liberty on July 4 to protest the separation of families at the Mexican border, stands next to a poster of herself outside a courthouse in lower Manhattan after she was convicted of misdemeanor charges Monday, Dec. 17, 2018, in New York. Associated Press

and gird themselves like mountain climbers to safely bring her down. The nearly four-hour dem-

onstration forced an evacuation of 4,330 people from the statue grounds on one of its busiest days of the

year. Okoumou had testified that she couldn't live with the sight of "children in cages" and thought climbing the statue was the only way to bring attention to the issue. "I have had nightmares. I just couldn't live with it," she said. Outside court afterward, she stood alongside Kuby, defense attorney Rhidaya Trivedi and California attorney Michael Avenatti, who served as an adviser in the case, as supporters held signs behind her. "We stand on the right side of history," Okoumou said. "I am not a bit discouraged today." She said she didn't regret her Statue of Liberty protest. In a statement, U.S. Attorney Geoffrey S. Ber- man praised Gorenstein's verdict. □



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Bomb explodes outside private Greek TV station, no one hurt

By **DEREK GATOPOULOS**
NICHOLAS PAPHITIS
Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — A powerful bomb exploded early Monday outside the southern Athens headquarters of Greece's private Skai broadcaster, which has been strongly critical of government policies, damaging the glass-fronted building but causing no injuries.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the bombing, which resembled attacks by domestic extreme left-wing and anarchist groups, whose past targets have included media groups.

Greece's left-led government, which has harshly and repeatedly criticized Skai for its perceived anti-

government bias, strongly condemned the bombing. Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras issued a statement condemning the "attack by cowardly and dark forces against democracy itself."

"I express my frank solidarity with the broadcaster's journalists and employees," he added.

Police said the blast occurred at 2:35 a.m. outside the Skai TV and radio building — where the respected Kathimerini newspaper is also housed — after telephoned warnings to a news website and another TV station prompted authorities to evacuate the building.

The attackers escaped undetected after planting the bomb, which detonated 45 minutes after the warn-



Greek forensic experts search outside the private Greek television station Skai, after a powerful bomb explosion, in Faliro, Athens, on Monday, Dec. 17, 2018.

Associated Press

ing calls. Police, who were checking cameras in the area for possible clues on the bombers, said the device had contained at least five kilograms of explosives.

"This was a strike against democracy. Thankfully, there was only material damage — it's a relief that no one was hurt — following the swift action taken by the

police," Public Order Minister Olga Gerovasili said.

She said anti-terrorism police are leading the investigation.

Skai said it had warned authorities, to no avail, that it had been receiving threats. It also linked the attack with the strong criticism Skai had been receiving from the government, which has banned its officials from appearing on Skai broadcasts to protest reporting that the government sees as biased against it.

"Government officials and propaganda mechanisms have rendered our station a target," a Skai statement said. "Following today's dramatic development they must understand the weight and full extent of their incendiary comments." □

France: Alleged gun source given preliminary terror charges

By **SAMUEL PETREQUIN**
Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — A man suspected of supplying the gun that was used in the shooting attack that killed five people near a Christmas market in Strasbourg was handed preliminary terror charges Monday, according to a judicial official close to the investigation. The official, who could not be named with the case ongoing, said the individual appeared before a judge and was charged with criminal association with terrorists, as well as possessing and supplying arms in connection with a terrorist enterprise.

The man is suspected of furnishing the weapon that alleged gunman Cherif Chekatt used in the Dec. 11 attack, the judicial official said. He was remanded into custody. Chekatt, 29, died in a shootout with po-



Residents react during a gathering in a central square of the eastern French city of Strasbourg, Sunday Dec. 16, 2018 to pay homage to the victims of a gunman who killed four people and wounded a dozen more.

Associated Press

lice in Strasbourg Thursday. Two other people were arrested and detained Monday as part of the terror investigation the Paris prosecutor's office is conducting into the attack. They also were suspected of "playing a role in supplying the firearm," said the official.

Their arrests bring the number of suspects in custody since the attack to three; Chekatt's parents and two of his brothers were questioned by police last week and released.

The death toll from the attack increased to five Sunday night after a Pol-

ish man died of his wounds in a Strasbourg hospital. Barto Orent-Niedzielski, 36, lived in the city, where he worked at the European Parliament and as a journalist. The other casualties include a tourist from Thailand and an Italian journalist covering the European Parliament.

According to some reports, Orent-Niedzielski fought the shooter and stopped him from entering a crowded club, possibly preventing more deaths.

Polish President Andrzej Duda wrote early Monday on Twitter that "I knew him by sight. I am shocked. I had not realized that he was the one mortally wounded protecting other people. Honor to his memory. RIP."

Two people were arrested and one appeared before a French judge Monday as

part of a terrorism-related investigation of the shooting attack that killed five people last week near a Christmas market in Strasbourg, the Paris prosecutor's office said.

An official close to the investigation said the man who was in court is suspected of involvement in supplying the weapon that alleged gunman Cherif Chekatt used in the Dec. 11 attack. Chekatt, 29, died in a shootout with police in Strasbourg Thursday.

The two detained Monday also were suspected of "playing a role in supplying the firearm," said the official, who could not be named with the case ongoing. Their arrests bring the number of suspects in custody since the attack to three; Chekatt's parents and two of his brothers were questioned by police last week and released. □



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May says postponed Brexit vote to be held week of Jan 14

By JILL LAWLESS
DANICA KIRKA

LONDON (AP) — Prime Minister Theresa May said Monday that the postponed vote in Parliament on Britain's Brexit agreement with the European Union will be held the week of Jan. 14 — more than a month after it was originally scheduled and just 10 weeks before Britain leaves the EU.

But even as May insisted she could salvage her unpopular divorce deal, pressure was mounting for dramatic action — a new referendum or a vote among lawmakers — to find a way out of Britain's Brexit impasse and prevent the economic damage of a messy exit from the EU on March 29 with no agreement in place.

Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the main opposition Labour Party, said he would submit a motion of no-confidence in the prime minister over her delays. Losing the vote on such a motion would increase the pressure on May, but unlike a no-confidence vote in the government as a whole it wouldn't trigger a process leading to the fall of the government and an early election.

No date was immediately set for the confidence vote. The British government and the EU sealed a divorce deal last month, but May postponed a parliamentary vote intended to ratify the agreement last week when it became clear legislators would overwhelmingly reject it.

She tried to win changes from the EU to sweeten the deal for reluctant lawmak-



Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May leaves 10 Downing Street, in London Monday, Dec. 17, 2018, for the House of Commons to make a statement on the EU Summit held recently in Brussels.

Associated Press

ers, but was rebuffed by the bloc at a summit in Brussels last week. May's authority also has been shaken after a no-confidence vote from her own party on Wednesday that saw more than a third of Conservative lawmakers vote against her. May told lawmakers in the House of Commons on Monday that they would resume debate on the deal when Parliament comes back after its Christmas break the week of Jan. 7, with the vote held the following week.

"I know this is not everyone's perfect deal," May said. "It is a compromise. But if we let the perfect be the enemy of the good then we risk leaving the EU with no deal."

Opposition legislators — and many from May's Conservative Party — remain opposed to the deal, and

accused May of deliberately wasting time by delaying the vote for several more weeks.

"The prime minister has cynically run down the clock trying to maneuver Parliament into a choice between two unacceptable outcomes: her deal and no deal," Corbyn said.

A growing number of politicians from across the political spectrum believe a new referendum may be the only way to break the political logjam over Brexit. But May told lawmakers that staging another referendum would ride roughshod over voters' 2016 decision to leave the EU and "would say to millions who trusted in democracy that our democracy does not deliver."

May's deal is loathed both by pro-Brexit lawmakers, who think it keeps Britain

bound too closely to the bloc, and pro-Europeans, who see it as inferior to staying in the EU.

The main concern for pro-Brexit lawmakers is a contentious insurance policy known as the "backstop," which would keep the U.K. tied to EU customs rules in order to guarantee the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland remains open after Brexit.

EU officials insisted at last week's summit that the withdrawal agreement cannot be renegotiated, although they also stressed that the backstop was meant only as a temporary measure of last resort.

May said she had had "robust" exchanges with other EU leaders in Brussels, but that the two sides were still holding talks about "further political and legal assurances" about the back-

stop.

European Commission chief spokesman Margaritis Schinas, however, said Monday that "at this stage, no further meetings with the United Kingdom are foreseen."

With Britain's departure from the bloc just three months away, it remains unclear whether the country will leave with a deal or crash out with no deal — a chaotic outcome that could see economic recession, gridlock at U.K. ports, planes grounded and shortages of essential goods.

The Cabinet will discuss "no-deal" planning at its weekly meeting on Tuesday, with details to be announced soon of 2 billion pounds (\$2.5 billion) in government funding to absorb some of the potential economic shock.

Pro-EU Cabinet ministers, meanwhile, are seeking to work with opposition politicians to find a way out of the morass.

One suggestion is to give members of Parliament votes on a range of options — from leaving without a deal to holding a new referendum — to see if there is majority support for any course of action.

May's spokesman, James Slack, said Monday that the government had "no plans" to hold such an indicative vote. But the idea has support in Cabinet.

"We can't just have continuing uncertainty and I think Parliament should be invited to say what it would agree with," Business Secretary Greg Clark told the BBC. □

Pakistan, Saudis, UAE join US-Taliban talks

By KATHY GANNON

ISLAMABAD (AP) — The Taliban held another round of talks with U.S. officials on Monday, this time in the United Arab Emirates and also involving Saudi, Pakistani and Emirati representatives, part of the latest attempt to bring a negotiated end to Afghanistan's 17-year war.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid offered few details of the daylong meeting except to say "discussions were held with the American side over the end to the invasion of Afghanistan." He dismissed Afghan media reports that Afghan government representatives, who are in the United Arab Emirates, had met with the Taliban.

"There is no plan to meet the Kabul administration," Mujahid said. "There is no possibility of the presence of the Kabul administration in the meeting, which the Islamic Emirate will attend." The Taliban refer to their movement as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan,

and dismiss the Kabul government as a U.S. puppet. Mujahid said the meetings were continuing.

Khalil Minawi, director of Afghanistan's state-run Bakhtar news agency, earlier tweeted that officials from the United States, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the UAE held meetings Sunday ahead of "the Pakistani-sponsored U.S.-Taliban meeting."

While Afghan officials did not attend Monday's meeting with the Taliban, their presence in the UAE is a significant step in efforts to get the two sides talking. The Taliban have consistently refused to hold direct talks with the Afghan government, insisting they will only negotiate with the U.S.

Afghanistan's National Security Adviser Hamdullah Mohib was among the Afghan government representatives in the UAE, a senior Afghan government official told The Associated Press. The presence of such a high-ranking individual was seen as a sign of prog-



In this March 13, 2009, file photo, Zalmay Khalilzad, special adviser on reconciliation speaks during a news conference in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Associated Press

ress.

Also significant is the presence of the Saudis and Emiratis, both of whom have significant influence over the Taliban, and who might be able to help secure concessions from the group eventually leading to face-to-face talks with Kabul.

Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Pakistan were the only three countries to recognize the Taliban govern-

ment during its five-year rule, which ended with the 2001 U.S.-led invasion. Washington has considerable sway over the Afghan government, which it heavily bankrolls. The U.S. has spent \$1 trillion in Afghanistan since ousting the Taliban and the war there has become America's longest. While the U.S. State Department has neither denied nor confirmed previous meetings with the Taliban,

Washington's peace envoy, Zalmay Khalilzad, says he has met with all sides in the conflict.

The Taliban control nearly half of Afghanistan and carry out daily attacks, mainly targeting security forces and government officials.

The group said last month that it held three days of talks with Khalilzad in Qatar, where the Taliban maintain a political office. Khalilzad then went to Kabul, where he urged Afghan President Ashraf Ghani to cobble together a team that could hold talks with the Taliban.

Khalilzad said he would like to see a "roadmap" agreement reached before Afghan presidential elections, scheduled for next April. Since his appointment in September, Khalilzad has made several tours of the region. Earlier this month, he held meetings in Islamabad. Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan later said Khalilzad asked Pakistan to assist in getting the Taliban to the negotiating table. □

Kremlin hails go-ahead for oligarchs to attend Davos forum

By NATALIYA VASILYEVA

JAMEY KEATEN

Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — The Kremlin said Monday that three high-profile Russian tycoons who are facing U.S. sanctions have been cleared to return to the World Economic Forum in Davos, following reports that they had been disinvited.

WEF organizers had reportedly shunned billionaires Oleg Deripaska and Viktor Vekselberg, and Andrei Kostin, the head of state-controlled bank VTB, from attending the rarefied January event at the Swiss ski resort.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said WEF organizers had listened to Russia's arguments against "a selective approach to Russian business."

Russia had threatened to boycott the gathering if the longtime Davos attendees were not allowed to attend. WEF officials never



In this July 2, 2015 file photo, Russian metals magnate Oleg Deripaska attends Independence Day celebrations at Spaso House, the residence of the American Ambassador, in Moscow, Russia.

Associated Press

confirmed whether the three had been disinvited. On Sunday, WEF head of compliance Alois Zwinggi said Davos forum organizers would host delegations from all Group of 20 countries, including a "high level governmental delegation" from Russia.

"Should the delegation include individuals under

sanction, all necessary measures have been undertaken to ensure that their presence would be fully compliant with current legal conditions," Zwinggi added in a statement. It made no reference to Deripaska, Kostin or Vekselberg.

The apparent arrangement would allow the oli-

garchs to attend in an official delegation. U.S. sanctions could affect anyone who does business with the three men, potentially jeopardizing WEF staffers or other participants.

The Financial Times in October reported that the three men were told they were not welcome at the Davos gathering next year. All three have led companies that are high-paying members of the WEF.

A respected Russian online publication, The Bell, reported Monday that WEF organizers came forward with several pre-conditions for the sanctioned visitors. They are reportedly not allowed to take part in panels organized by U.S. citizens and U.S. authorities or to engage in business transactions with U.S. nationals, even if that's simply about travel arrangements.

Asked about the report, Kremlin spokesman Peskov said he understood the

WEF's jitters about U.S. sanctions but expressed confidence the businessmen would have no problem finding useful non-American contacts at the event. WEF says it has always respected the U.S. sanctions against the Russians and made it clear that anyone who attends the Davos event would have to comply with them.

"Since the introduction of the U.S. sanctions in April, the forum's position — as an organization that has offices in the U.S. and that has U.S. employees — has always been one of complete and strict compliance with all the U.S. sanctions," said Georg Schmitt, WEF head of corporate affairs. The issue strikes at painstaking efforts and high-powered legal and public relations resources that Moscow has mobilized against U.S. sanctions that have dented Russia's economic prospects. □



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US sportswear traced to factory in China's internment camps

By DAKE KANG
MARTHA MENDOZA
YANAN WANG

Associated Press

HOTAN, China (AP) — Chinese men and women locked in a mass detention camp where authorities are "re-educating" ethnic minorities are sewing clothes that have been imported all year by a U.S. sportswear company.

The camp, in Hotan, China, is one of a growing number of internment camps in the Xinjiang region, where by some estimates 1 million Muslims are detained, forced to give up their language and their religion and subject to political indoctrination. Now, the Chinese government is also forcing some detainees to work in manufacturing and food industries. Some of them are within the internment camps; others are privately-owned, state-subsidized factories where detainees are sent once they are released.

The Associated Press has tracked recent, ongoing shipments from one such factory — Hetian Taida Apparel — inside an internment camp to Badger Sportswear, a leading supplier in Statesville, North Carolina. Badger's clothes are sold on college campuses and to sports teams across the country, although there is no way to tell where any particular shirt made in Xinjiang ends up.

The shipments show how difficult it is to stop products made with forced labor from getting into the global supply chain, even though such imports are illegal in the U.S. Badger CEO John Anton said Sunday that the company would halt shipments while it investigates. Hetian Taida's chairman Wu Hongbo confirmed that



In this file image from undated video footage run by China's CCTV via AP Video, Muslim trainees work in a garment factory at the Hotan Vocational Education and Training Center in Hotan, Xinjiang, northwest China.

Associated Press

the company has a factory inside a re-education compound, and said they provide employment to those trainees who were deemed by the government to be "unproblematic."

"We're making our contribution to eradicating poverty," Wu told the AP over the phone.

Chinese authorities say the camps offer free vocational training for Uighurs, Kazakhs and other minorities, mostly Muslims, as part of a plan to bring them into "a modern civilized" world and eliminate poverty in the region. They say that people in the centers have signed agreements to receive vocational training.

The Xinjiang Propaganda Department did not respond to a faxed request for comment. A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman accused the foreign media Monday of making "many untrue re-

ports" about the training centers, but did not specify when asked for details.

"Those reports are completely based on hearsay evidence or made out of thin air," the spokeswoman, Hua Chunying, said at a daily briefing.

However, a dozen people who either had been in a camp or had friends or family in one told the AP that detainees they knew were given no choice but to work at the factories. Most of the Uighurs and Kazakhs, who were interviewed in exile, also said that even people with professional jobs were retrained to do menial work.

Payment varied according to the factory. Some got paid nothing, while others earned up to several hundred dollars a month, they said — barely above minimum wage for the poorer parts of Xinjiang. A person with firsthand knowledge of

the situation in one county estimated that more than 10,000 detainees — or 10 to 20 percent of the internment population there — are working in factories, with some earning just a tenth of what they used to earn before. The person declined to be named out of fear of retribution.

A former reporter for Xinjiang TV in exile said that during his month-long detention last year, young people in his camp were taken away in the mornings to work without compensation in carpentry and a cement factory.

"The camp didn't pay any money, not a single cent," he said, asking to be identified only by his first name, Elyar, because he has relatives still in Xinjiang. "Even for necessities, such as things to shower with or sleep at night, they would call our families outside to get them to pay for it."

Rushan Abbas, a Uighur in Washington, D.C., said her sister is among those detained. The sister, Dr. Gulshan Abbas, was taken to what the government calls a vocational center, although she has no specific information on whether her sister is being forced to work.

"American companies importing from those places should know those products are made by people being treated like slaves," she said. "What are they going to do, train a doctor to be a seamstress?"

Mainur Medetbek's husband did odd repair jobs before vanishing into a camp in February during a visit to China from their home in Kazakhstan. She has been able to glean a sense of his conditions from monitored exchanges with relatives and from the husband of a woman in the same camp. He works in an apparel factory and is allowed to leave and spend the night with relatives every other Saturday.

Though Medetbek is uncertain how much her husband makes, the woman in his camp earns 600 yuan (about \$87) a month, less than half the local minimum wage and far less than what Medetbek's husband used to earn.

"They say it's a factory, but it's an excuse for detention. They don't have freedom, there's no time for him to talk with me," she said. "They say they found a job for him. I think it's a concentration camp."

New Jersey Republican Congressman Chris Smith, a member of the House Foreign Relations Committee, called on the Trump Administration Monday to ban imports from Chinese companies associated with detention camps. □



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Madagascar's presidential runoff pits 2 ex-heads of state

By LAETITIA BEZAIN

ANTANANARIVO, Madagascar (AP) — The Indian Ocean island nation of Madagascar goes to the polls on Wednesday for a runoff presidential election that features two former heads of state who have a prickly past.

Andry Rajoelina received 39 percent of the vote in the first round, while Marc Ravalomanana got 35 percent. They face off for the first time since political turmoil in 2009 forced Ravalomanana from power. Both have said they will accept the runoff's results.

The capital, Antananarivo, is vibrant in the final days before the vote with the orange T-shirts of Rajoelina and the white and green ones of Ravalomanana worn by hundreds of supporters. Minibuses fill the

streets with ringing chants for one candidate or the other.

Ten million voters are registered in what the World Bank calls one of the world's poorest nations, though one rich in ecological diversity. More than two-thirds of the population of 25 million live in extreme poverty, while corruption is widespread.

The 44-year-old Rajoelina says Madagascar needs a young leader and he pitches grand plans for the future. He was president from 2009 to 2014 during a transitional government.

"I will build a factory that makes solar panels so that every home will have electricity," he vowed during a rally on Friday in Miandrivazo in the central part of the country. The previous day he promised 10



A man cycles past a street vendor with election posters in Antananarivo, Madagascar, Sunday, Dec. 16, 2018.

Associated Press

helicopters to help a rural southern community combat banditry.

For his part, the 69-year-old Ravalomanana, who led Madagascar from 2002 to 2009, is appealing to voters based on his experience.

"You need a competent, mature leader," he said in a

speech in the capital early this month.

The rivals have used the campaign to snipe at each other, highlighting their tense history.

"We need a democrat, not a putschist. We will not accept a president who divides the country," Ravalomanana said.

manana said. He had to quit the presidency in 2009 after a series of military-backed challenges supported by Rajoelina, who was the capital's mayor at the time.

For his part, Rajoelina has responded that "we must fight against dictatorship and egoism."

In a poor neighborhood of the capital, Manarintsoa Atsinanana, the candidates' promises are inspiring few people to dream.

"I'm one of those people who will never be convinced because no matter who it is, Ravalomanana or Rajoelina, they'll never put any food on my plate. They ignore the people's poverty," Tatiana Rabenirina said bitterly. She stood in front of her tiny home fashioned from planks and other odds and ends. □

Cambodia's biggest hydropower dam now producing electricity



In this Jan. 10, 2018, file photo, China's Premier Li Keqiang, left, heads to the meeting room with his Cambodian counterpart Hun Sen before the opening of the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation forum Leaders Meeting in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Associated Press

By SOPHENG CHEANG
Associated Press

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) — Cambodia's largest hydropower project officially began producing electricity Monday as the country tries to increase its energy capacity to reduce energy imports and help jump-start industrial expansion.

Prime Minister Hun Sen inaugurated the 400-megawatt Lower Sesan II hydropower dam in the northeastern province of Stung Treng. The project, constructed on a build-operate-transfer basis, will boost the country's production of electric-

ity by 20 percent, according to the Ministry of Mines and Energy.

It was built over four years at a cost of nearly \$800 million and is a joint venture of China's Hydrolancang International Energy, which has a 51 percent stake, Cambodia's Royal Group with 39 percent and Vietnam's EVN International with 10 percent.

The dam is expected to bring in almost \$30 million in tax revenue yearly. Ownership will be handed over to the government after 40 years.

Opponents say the dam will damage the biodiversity of

two tributaries of the Mekong River and devastate the livelihoods and homes of thousands of people. As many as 100,000 people could lose the ability to catch fish.

The dam is the seventh commercial-scale hydropower dam in Cambodia, bringing hydropower production to 1,328 megawatts.

Hydropower supplies 45 percent of Cambodia's electricity consumption, followed by 35 percent from coal-fired power plants and about 5 percent from petroleum and alternative energy. □

LOCAL



Thank you our beloved Marijke Croes

ORANJESTAD – All the colleagues of Bon Dia Aruba and Aruba Today came together to celebrate the remarkable 27th anniversary of our beloved colleague Marijke Croes, who at the same time began her retirement.

Croes was part of the group that founded Caribbean Speed Printers N.V. and was in charge of the first publication of both the Bon Dia Aruba and Aruba Today newspapers.

As a member of the sales department, Croes, was well-known and very appreciated by our business partners and local marketing agencies. Croes was always ready to go beyond the call of duty to please her clients. She was able to step in and help in any way possible to see that Bon Dia, which she calls her baby, succeeded.

Surrounded by her colleagues, Croes shared some funny stories about "her baby" which she loves with all her heart. The passion and love was felt in every word she spoke and there were tears in her eyes. She stated that it wasn't an easy decision to leave Bon Dia behind to go into retirement seeing the love she has for her job.

Everyone received a rose from Croes as a token of appreciation. Her kindness, her smile, her passion, her professionalism, and most of all, her responsibility towards the job will be missed by all of us. We might not see her everyday, but we can still listen to her unique and beautiful voice on the radio where she hosts a program with oldies songs. Aruba Today, together with Bon Dia Aruba, wants to Thank Marijke Croes for all the wonderful years she has dedicated here, at her home-away-from-home, and we wish her a well in her retirement. We shall miss you dearly! □



5th Christmas edition of Cadushi Festival

ORANJESTAD — The countdown just began for the annual event of Cadushi Festival which this year marks its 9th edition and the 5th with the Christmas sphere. They are ready to show you a unique side of Aruba.

The idea for this festival was born out of a perceived necessity for a different kind of activity on the island, an inspiring alternative gathering place for curious souls which could simultaneously serve as a showcase for local artists, small business, brave hearts and creative, out-of-the-box entrepreneurs.

Having lived in the Netherlands for many years, the founding members Carina and Julienne had been missing the festival ambience ever since returning back home and decided to recreate this through the activity which is now known as the Cadushi Festival. The very first Cadushi festival took place back in 2014 in the garden behind



a friend's yoga studio on a low-budget and was completely independent. The first Cadushi Festival had an amazing response and it set the tone for the festivals to follow.

The Cadushi Festival aims to inspire and connect people of all walks of life, both adults and kids, who seek enrichment of their lives on a physical, mental and spiritual level. The festival promotes a more conscious lifestyle and highlights the importance of supporting local artists, artisans, small business owners and cre-

atives in general. Awareness promoting activities such as meditation, yoga, handmade, recycled, reusable products and health conscious products can also be found at the Cadushi Festival. You will furthermore find a variety of unique food and beverage stands and activities such as sound healing, tarot, creative workshops and live performances. The Cadushi Festival is not only aimed at the locals but also at the tourists showing them a different and unique side of Aruba, encouraging them



to live mindfully as well as to support Aruba's local artists and entrepreneurs while enjoying their stay in Aruba.

Slow down, buy local, is the Cadushi Festival's slogan. Slow down, in order to return to our natural ways, live more consciously and mindfully as a way to balance out the tendency to make everything faster (fast food, fast living etc). And lastly, buy local, which focuses on supporting local artists, the creative and the entrepreneurial community while encouraging new

and unique initiatives. Upcoming Saturday December 22nd the Cadushi Festival awaits you at the Nikki Habibe square in the heart of Oranjestad from 5 PM to 11 PM. Come gather and connect with other like-minded individuals in a positive and nourishing setting where you will be sure to leave feeling inspired, energized and empowered.

For more information visit their facebook page Cadushi Festival. □

Tourism bolsters economy in the first six months of 2018

ORANJESTAD — Today the Centrale Bank van Aruba (CBA) publishes the State of the Economy of the first two quarters of 2018. This publication provides a synopsis of the local and international economic developments of this period. The highlights hereof are presented below, including a summary of main economic indicators.

In comparison to 2017, Aruba's economy seems to have performed marginally better in the first six months of 2018. The available tourism indicators show consistent buoyant developments as the number of stay-over and cruise visitors, nights spent, as well as hotel occupancy and hotel revenues turned into markedly strong growth figures. Likewise, tourism receipts as reported by commercial banks trended strongly in the first six months of 2018. The upbeat effects of tourism development are, however, mitigated in part by

Table: Main economic indicators first two quarters of 2018

Indicator	2017 Jan Jun	2018 Jan Jun	Change
Hotel revenue per available room (US\$) Stay-over	224 526,743	252 540,377	28 13,634
visitors (numbers) Cruise visitors (numbers)	435,137 313	437,245 162	2,108 -151 17.8
Construction permits (Afl. million) Imports of machinery	145.0 52.3	162.8 55.0	2.7 13.9 1.3
and electrotechnical equipment (Afl. million) Turnover	244.3 -0.4	258.1 0.8	-0.6 -2.5
tax receipts (Afl. million) Taxes on income and profit	94.4 88.1	93.885.6	
(Afl. million) Twelve-month average rate of inflation			
(percent) Consumer confidence index (second quarter,			
index points) Government debt-to-GDP ratio			

the mixed results emanating from various consumption and investment indicators. Consumer confidence declined, while business confidence contracted. On the other hand, the proceeds from consumption-related taxes increased, whereas on-going large investment projects continued, and the value of housing mortgages grew. Imports expanded significantly in almost every category, likely driven by higher demand from tourists and large investment projects. Combined with declining (non-tourism) exports, this increase in imports signified a further deterioration of Aruba's trade deficit.

CPI inflation saw an up-

ward trend in the first half of 2018 resulting in an end-of-period inflation of 3.4 percent in June. Gasoline prices on average picked up by 10.6 percent in the first two quarters of 2018. Fruit prices experienced a spike of 4.0 percent from January to February 2018 (month on month), due to the closure of the Venezuelan border for trade with Aruba. Inflation is anticipated to rise further, pushed up by the higher turnover tax rate and BAZV rate as of July 1, 2018.

Total money supply widened to Afl. 4,330.7 million by end June 2018. This was caused mainly by an Afl. 126.2 million net expansion of credit to the public

sector as a result of the net purchase of issued government paper by the commercial banks. The development of the net foreign assets' position is above the traditional norms monitored by the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the CBA. Reserves thus remained at an adequate level throughout the first two quarters of 2018. Domestic credit extended to the private sector expanded by 0.8 percent to Afl. 3,159.2 million at the end of the second quarter of 2018 compared to the end of the fourth quarter of 2017. The fiscal deficit (on a cash basis) of the Government of Aruba improved to Afl. 2.9 million, or -0.1 percent

of GDP, for the first half of 2018. Revenues showed a significant growth, rising by 10.9 percent (+Afl. 65.7 million) compared to the first half of 2017. Driving this revenue growth was an expansion in both tax revenues and non-tax revenues. Stronger compliance helped to bolster tax revenue collection, to some extent supported by the continued efforts of the Tax Office to collect tax arrears. The jump in non-tax revenue was due mainly to higher dividend income revenue from state-owned companies (+Afl. 49.6 million). Expenditure outlays fell slightly by Afl. 4.9 million to Afl. 675.2 million in the period under review, as development fund spending halted with the cessation of this fund. The government debt reached Afl. 4,178.9 million. As a result, the debt-to-GDP ratio stood at 85.6 percent at the end of the period, 1.2 percentage points lower than at the end of 2017. □



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Last but not least: check out our website and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today's newspaper we received some great pictures from Nancy Fletch from Buffalo, New York. She wrote: "Aruba to me is sunsets, Santa, special occasions and of course Balashi". ☐





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THE CASINO
AT THE RITZ-CARLTON, ARUBA

Asi Es Mi Peru restaurant launches Chef Table 5 Course Menu: “It feels like having dinner at home in Peru”



EAGLE BEACH - Peruvian-born Roxanna Salinas is the proud owner of a restaurant that without doubt serves the purest Peruvian specialties in Aruba: **Asi Es Mi Peru** at Paradise Beach Villas. She herself welcomes you in ‘her home’ as that is how the restaurant is described by Peruvian foodies: Food like home, for sure the best compliment a restaurant can get. “Everything here is 100 % Peruvian, we are authentic and ethnic.” Peru by the way is considered to be the single most important cuisine in Latin America with a repertoire of dishes that might even beat France. Many big-name chefs travel to the country to get inspired.

How It All Started

“Many years ago during a Christmas gathering with family my mom told me why I did not open a Peruvian restaurant in Aruba. She said: who does not love Peruvian food?” That was the trigger for the start because Roxanne loves cooking, it is in her genes. Her mom and grandmother were great cooks. “My base principle was to do everything original and authentic. When guests come to this restaurant I want to serve them the food as if you were dining the best dishes in a house in Peru. The taste is equal, nothing is fused or changed. Many Peruvians that come here say: I feel like I am having dinner at home. It is very difficult to please Peruvians as naturally they know best what is authentic.” To find her Chef and Sous Chef she went to Peru where she interviewed 190 applicants. “We had more than 400 people that applied, after a screening that my brother and I did, we were left with 190 and out of them 10 cooked for me. I gave them a basket with ingredients and a certain plate they had to cook. Based on that I chose the Chef and Sous Chef.”



Chef Table 5 Course Menu

Peruvian food is remarkable for the diversity of its ingredients. It might be best known for its ceviche, the marinated seafood dish, but best-sellers are also Lomo Saltado (stir fry strips sirloin), seafood rice and Pescado a lo Macho (fish of the day). Roxanne explains that recently the Chef launched a 5-course Chef Table Menu. “Now that we have standardized our typical Peruvian cuisine, we are ready to take it to the

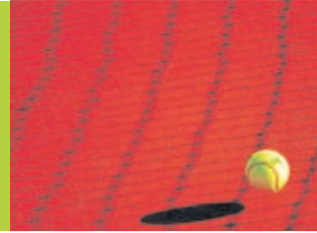


next level. Our Chef is very knowledgeable and we bring higher cuisine to the table.” Of the 5 courses the first is the Tiradito Tres Regiones, and the 2nd the Majao de Yuca con Pargo Escabechado paired with a wonderful Santiago Ruiz Albarino; The 3rd plate is a Cremosa de Quinoa con Aji Relleno paired with a Hahn Pinot Noir, the 4th the Lomo con Salsa de Hongos Andinos paired with a Merlot Santa Margarita, and the 5th a Crocante de Maracuya. Try this wonderful culinary experience!

Roxanne explains that the Peruvian food is influenced by different cultures. “A lot of people came from China to work in the sugar plantations, Japanese came to work in the rice fields and African immigrants brought their influences as well... that’s why you see a fusion in the dishes. The typical food and plates from Peru mixed with these influences make up for an excellent cuisine. Our sushi for example is totally different than the standard sushi and we have so many pastas that are outside of Italian pastas. The variety of corn, more than 500 variety of potatoes... I can go on and on.” I guess you will need to try it for yourself as Roxanne’s place is unique. Asi Es Mi Peru is open every day from 12 noon - 10:30 pm. They are closed on Monday evening. Have a peak on their website <https://www.asiesmiperuenaruba.com/> or Facebook [así es mi Perú](#). □



SPORTS



In this Oct. 13, 2018, file photo, Notre Dame head coach Brian Kelly watches during the second half of an NCAA college football game against Pittsburgh, in South Bend, Ind.

AP Coach of the Year: Notre Dame's Kelly wins for 2nd time

By RALPH D. RUSSO
AP College Football Writer

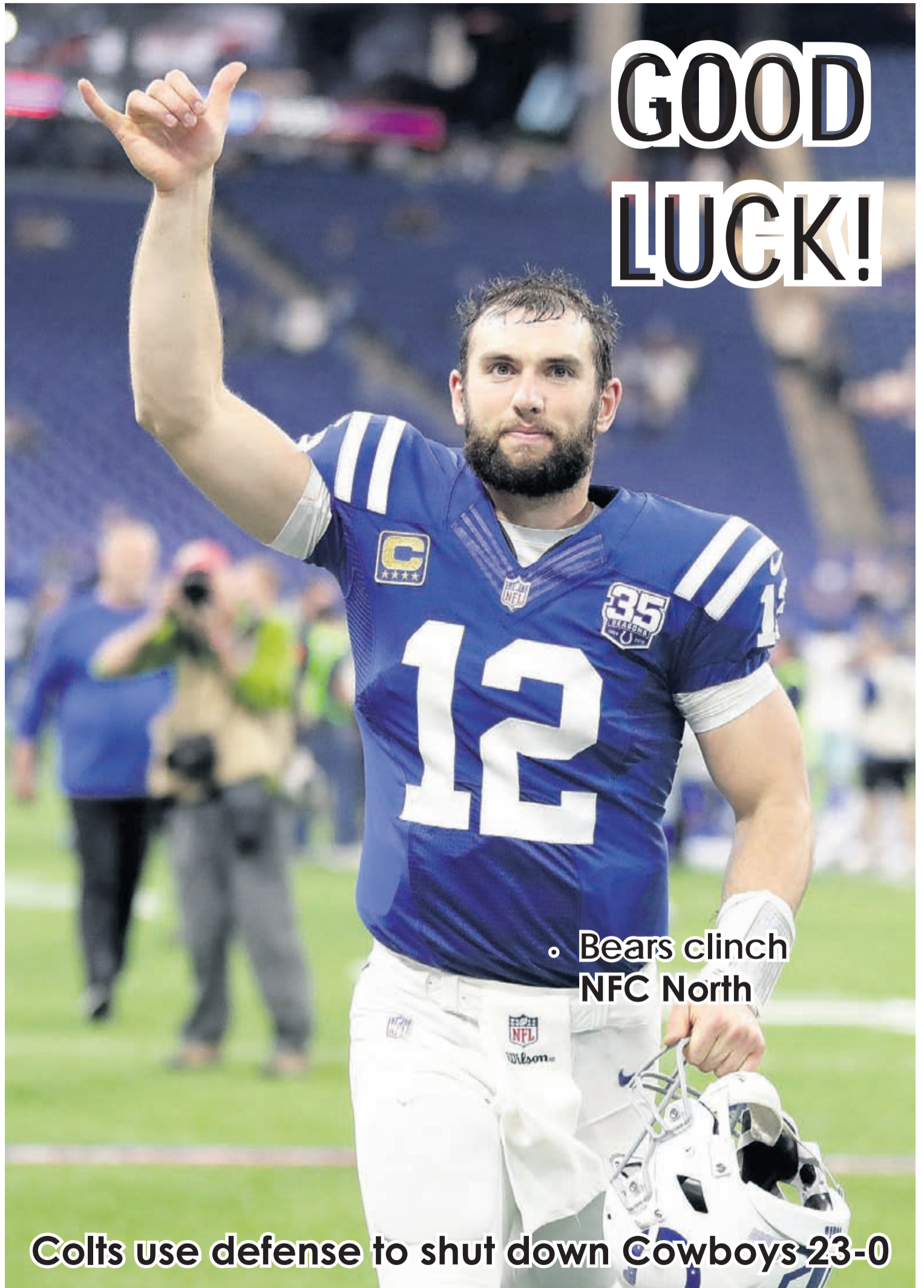
Notre Dame's Brian Kelly is The Associated Press college football Coach of the Year and the third coach to win the award twice since it was established in 1998.

Kelly received 16 of 58 first-place votes from AP college football poll voters and 81 total points. Alabama's Nick Saban was second with 16 first-place votes and 66 points and Central Florida first-year coach Josh Heupel was third with 33 points (five first-place votes).

Twelve coaches received at least one first-place vote and eight received at least three for the award announced Monday. Washington State's Mike Leach finished fourth with 26 points (three first-place votes) and Syracuse's Dino Babers was fifth with 25 (five first-place votes).

Kelly joins Saban and TCU's Gary Patterson as two-time winners. Kelly was also coach of the year in 2012.

Continued on Page 23



GOOD
LUCK!

• Bears clinch
NFC North

Colts use defense to shut down Cowboys 23-0

Indianapolis Colts quarterback Andrew Luck reacts as he leaves the field following an NFL football game against the Dallas Cowboys, Sunday, Dec. 16, 2018, in Indianapolis.



Austria's Marcel Hirscher crosses the finish line to win a ski World Cup men's Parallel Giant Slalom, in Alta Badia, Italy, Monday, Dec. 17, 2018.

Associated Press

Hirscher wins parallel GS; ties for 3rd on all-time win list

LA VILLA, Italy (AP) — Marcel Hirscher extended his dominance in Alta Badia by winning a parallel giant slalom night race on Monday and tied fellow Austrian Annemarie Moser-Proell for third on the World Cup's all-time wins list.

Hirscher beat unheralded Thibaut Favrot of France in the final by 0.14 seconds. It was Hirscher's second win in two days after taking the traditional GS race on Sunday.

He has a record eight career victories on the Gran Risa course.

It was also the 62nd World Cup victory of Hirscher's career, putting him level with Moser-Proell and behind only record-holder Ingemar Stenmark (86 wins) and Lindsey Vonn (82).

"In a skiing nation like Austria that is something very special," Hirscher said. "Unfortunately, I never watched (Moser-Proell) race but it's always nice to talk to Annemarie. I really like how much appreciation she shows for current ski racing." With his first parallel GS win in his fourth try in Badia, Hirscher has now won all types of technical races: Traditional slaloms and giant slaloms, city event parallel slaloms and

parallel GS.

Favrot made the podium in only his 12th World Cup race; his best previous results were 17th in a GS in Germany last season and 18th on Sunday.

Alexis Pinturault of France won the small final for third place, beating defending champion Matts Olsson of Sweden by 0.18.

Pinturault also finished third on Sunday.

Needing to complete six runs to win in a knockout format, skiers were shuttled back up to the start after each leg on offroad vehicles following brief pit stops with their ski technicians.

Hirscher extended his overall World Cup lead to 139 points over fellow Austrian Max Franz, who was eliminated in the first round.

Three more technical races — one giant slalom and two slaloms — are scheduled for Saalbach, Austria, and Madonna Di Campiglio, Italy, this week.

"These were two very hard days," Hirscher said. "This whole schedule for all athletes is pretty hard to manage but it is working out amazing at the moment and hopefully I can take this form with me to the races in Saalbach and Madonna." □



In this May 29, 2018, file photo, Serena Williams returns a shot against Krystyna Pliskova during their first-round match of the French Open tennis tournament in Paris, France.

Associated Press

WTA changes rules affecting players returning from pregnancy

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)

— The women's tennis tour approved rule changes Monday that are meant to ensure players are not penalized after they return from pregnancy or an injury that causes a long absence.

The changes were prompted, in part, by the experiences of former No. 1 players Serena Williams and Victoria Azarenka, both of whom returned to competition after giving birth.

The WTA announced that players returning to the tour may use a special ranking for up to three years after the birth of a child, and the exemption can be used for seedings at big events.

Williams, who owns an Open-era record 23 Grand Slam singles titles, was unseeded at this year's French Open in her first major since the birth of her daughter — despite having won the previous major she played, the 2017 Australian Open. Williams was seeded 25th at Wimbledon and 17th at the U.S. Open, and she reached the finals and lost at both of those majors.

Players who return from an injury that keeps them out of competition for a year or longer may use a special ranking in 12 tournaments. No player will be bumped from her earned seeded

position.

"These changes," WTA CEO and chairman Steve Simon said, "are designed to fully support players in their return to competition, while maintaining the highest standards of athletic competition and fairness."

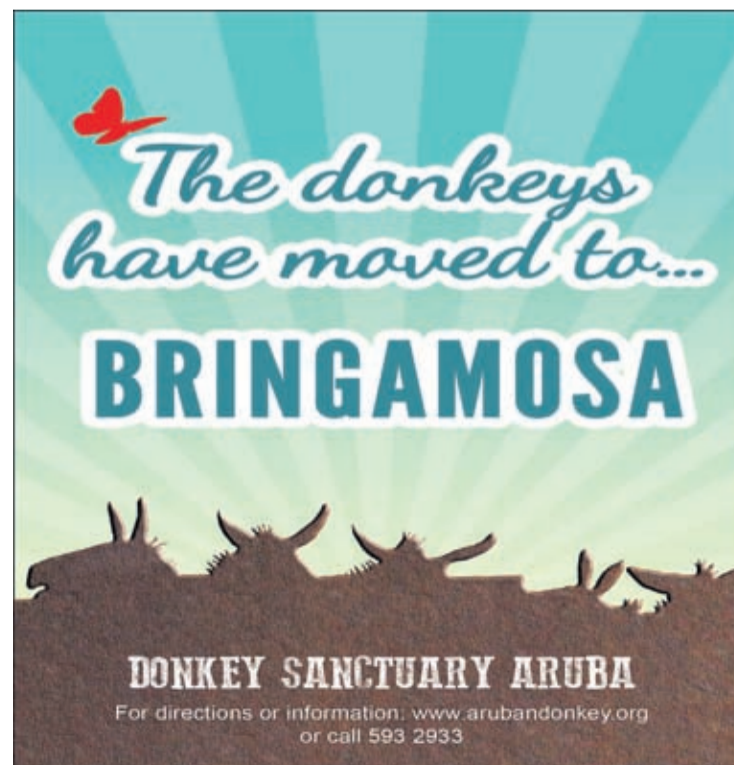
The tour also said it will ensure women at WTA tournaments "are not penalized or prohibited from wearing leggings or compression shorts without a skirt, dress or shorts over them."

Williams wore a black bodysuit at the French Open, where she pulled out with an injury before the fourth round. Williams

said she wore the compression suit because of a history of blood clots, including after childbirth.

This fall, the president of the French Tennis Federation said Williams could no longer wear the black bodysuit at the French Open. Azarenka, a member of the WTA Players' Council, said she wants to make sure the WTA is "the most progressive and inclusive association in sports."

"Our players should feel comfortable and confident to take time away from the courts to have a family or recover from injury," Azarenka said. □



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Motto at Driftwood Restaurant: Hook and Cook your Own Fish!



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Captain Herby would catch the fish to be served at the restaurant the same day. That concept still lives, what is 'hooked' during the day is cooked in the evening at the restaurant.

Herby shares his experience with his crew, who take out guests daily on their tournament rigged 35ft twin engine

Bertram "Driftwood" or on their more spacious 37ft twin engine Bertram called "Living Easy". Both yachts are available for charters from 8am to 12 noon, or from 1 to 5pm (6-hour trips also available). To book a fishing charter visit www.driftwoodfishingcharters.com or call Herbert direct at (297)-5924040.



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Address: Klipstraat 12. Oranjestad, Aruba

East features MVP candidates even with LeBron in the West

By SCHUYLER DIXON
AP Sports Writer

With eight shopping days to Christmas, the NBA's decision to have Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo and Philadelphia's Joel Embiid in its holiday lineup is more than just sides in another hoop smorgasbord. It puts the spotlight on — and raises a question — about the MVP race, as in, who in the Eastern Conference is a legitimate contender. It's a question because the last East MVP, LeBron James going on six years ago, has moved West.

Of course, the conversation has to include the biggest name to go the opposite direction this past offseason: Toronto's Kawhi Leonard, who forced his way out of San Antonio in a trade after missing most of last season with a mysterious leg injury.

"Oh yeah," first-year Atlanta coach Lloyd Pierce

declared about the East's MVP hopes.

"We missed Kawhi last year and the people that coached against him didn't for a reason," said Pierce, who was an assistant with the 76ers for Embiid's first two seasons. "He's a dominant two-way player. Antetokounmpo is unbelievable and his growth continues to rise every game, every year."

The "Greek Freak" opens the Christmas lineup a week from Tuesday with a visit to Madison Square Garden to face the Knicks, and Embiid will play at East rival Boston. Leonard and the Raptors don't play Dec. 25.

The 7-foot Embiid is sixth in scoring, third in rebounding and eighth in blocks with the Sixers sitting fourth in the East going into Sunday's games. Another West star, New Orleans' Anthony Davis, is the other player in the top eight in those three categories. "It's a little tougher

for those big guys to get in the mix, but I think Joel, he'll make his mark," Pierce said. "He's got to be if not an MVP, a defensive player of the year candidate, first-team all-defensive player this year."

If Antetokounmpo can get his 26.6-point scoring average back to 27, he has a chance to be the first to average that many points along with at least 13 rebounds and six assists per game. The Bucks star is eighth in scoring and fifth in rebounding.

"He's doing things I think LeBron's doing," Indiana coach Nate McMillan said. "He's a forward playing the point. He's an excellent passer, a willing passer, he pushes the ball in transition. He can score. He's assisting, he's rebounding."

Leonard has missed games with foot and hip injuries, along with the occasional rest on the second night of a back-to-back after miss-



In this Dec. 9, 2018, file photo, Toronto Raptors forward Kawhi Leonard (2) puts pressure on Milwaukee Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo (34) as he looks for the pass during second half NBA basketball action in Toronto.

Associated Press

ing all but nine games of his final season with the Spurs because of the leg injury.

"Khawi is certainly an MVP-caliber player and I keep saying that because of how good he is at the defensive end makes him one

of the most interesting candidates," Raptors coach Nick Nurse said. "His dominance at times on that end of the floor, along with dropping in 25-30 points, makes him a two-way interesting candidate." □

Bears clinch 1st playoff berth since 2010, beat Packers

By The Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Mitchell Trubisky threw for two touchdowns, Eddie Jackson ended Aaron Rodgers' NFL-record streak without an interception and the Chicago Bears clinched the NFC North with a 24-17 victory over the Green Bay Packers on Sunday.

The Bears (10-4) secured their first playoff appearance since the 2010 team won the division, and clinching with a rare victory over their heated rivals made it all the more sweet. The loss, coupled with Minnesota's 41-17 victory over Miami, keeps the Packers out of the postseason for the second year in a row.

Chicago had dropped nine of 10 against Green Bay (5-8-1). But the Bears secured their first trip to the playoffs in eight years with their seventh win in eight games.

For a team that came into the season with four straight last-place finishes, it's quite a turnaround. But with the hiring of coach Matt Nagy and trade for Khalil Mack in a busy offseason, the Bears made a huge jump.

Trubisky gave them a 21-14 lead early in the fourth quarter with a 13-yard pass to Trey Burton in the left side of the end zone. After stopping the Packers, Tarik Cohen returned a punt 44 yards to the 15. But he stepped out of bounds a yard short on a third-and-5 at the 10 when he easily could have gotten the first down.

That forced the Bears to settle for a field goal by Cody Parkey, making it 24-14. The Packers then drove to the 9, but on third down, Jackson picked off Rodgers, ending his streak at 402 passes.

STEELERS 17, PATRIOTS 10

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Rookie running back Jaylen Samuels, making his second start in place of injured James Conner, ran for a career-high 142 yards and made a critical third-down reception in the fourth quarter.

Pittsburgh snapped a three-game losing streak as Ben Roethlisberger threw for 235 yards with two first-



Chicago Bears linebacker Khalil Mack (52) sacks Green Bay Packers quarterback Aaron Rodgers (12) during the first half of an NFL football game Sunday, Dec. 16, 2018, in Chicago.

Associated Press

half touchdowns and two interceptions. The Steelers (8-5-1) remained in front of Baltimore in the AFC North with two weeks to go in the season.

Chris Boswell, who has struggled so badly this season the team held open tryouts during the week, atoned for a 32-yard miss in the third quarter by drilling a 48-yarder with 2:30 remaining.

Pittsburgh's defense, which let fourth-quarter leads slip away each of the last two games, made it stand. The Patriots (9-5) missed a chance to clinch their 10th straight AFC East title when Tom Brady's pass into the end zone for Julian Edelman was knocked down by Pittsburgh's Morgan Burnett.

Brady finished 25 of 36 for 279 yards with a touchdown and an interception while losing to the Steelers for the first time since 2011 and just the third time in 14 career meetings. The uncharacteristically sloppy Patriots were flagged 14 times for 106 yards.

EAGLES 30, RAMS 23

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Nick Foles and the Philadelphia Eagles hope they're about to make another late-season run that begins with another big road win over the Rams.

Foles took over for Carson

Wentz and passed for 270 yards, and Wendell Smallwood rushed for two touchdowns in the Eagles' victory over Los Angeles.

Rookie Josh Adams also rushed for a score as the Eagles (7-7) kept their playoff hopes alive with a gritty victory over the Rams (11-3), who lost consecutive regular-season games for the first time in coach Sean McVay's tenure.

The Eagles scored 17 consecutive points in the third quarter and then survived the Rams' late rally. They got help from Los Angeles returner JoJo Natson, who fumbled a punt return that D.J. Alexander recovered with 2:51 to play.

After Philadelphia's Jake Elliott missed a field goal with 1:08 left, Jared Goff got the Rams to the Philadelphia 18 with 4 seconds to play — but he couldn't connect with Josh Reynolds on a pass to the goal line as time expired.

COLTS 23, COWBOYS 0

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Marlon Mack rushed for a career-high 139 yards and two scores and the Colts shut out one of the league's hottest offenses. The Colts (8-6) stayed in the AFC playoff hunt with their seventh win in eight games and their first shutout since a 27-0 victory over Cincinnati on Oct. 19, 2014. Dallas (8-6) failed

to clinch the NFC East as its five-game winning streak ended.

Mack starred in Sunday's big show. He set the tone by running through a tackle for a 19-yard gain on his first carry, wound up carrying 22 times and matching a career high with the two scoring runs — all against the league's No. 3 rushing defense.

It marked the first time since Week 9 that Dallas allowed a team to top the 100-yard mark, and the Cowboys were shut out for the first time in more than 15 years. New England was the previous team to achieve the feat with a 12-0 victory on Nov. 16, 2003.

Mack even outperformed Ezekiel Elliott, who came into the weekend as the NFL's leading rusher. Elliott had 18 carries for 87 yards and caught seven passes for 41 yards.

49ERS 26, SEAHAWKS 23

SANTA CLARA, Calif. (AP) — Robbie Gould kicked a 36-yard field goal with 3:06 left in overtime and the 49ers snapped a 10-game losing streak against Seattle.

Nick Mullens threw for 275 yards and a touchdown to help the 49ers (4-10) win consecutive games for the first time this season. Richie James Jr. returned a kick 97 yards for a touchdown and Gould kicked four field

goals to give San Francisco its first win in the rivalry since 2013, when Jim Harbaugh was still coach.

The Seahawks (8-6) had their four-game winning streak snapped and missed a chance to clinch a playoff berth. Russell Wilson threw for 237 yards with two TD passes to Doug Baldwin and Chris Carson ran for 119 yards and a score for Seattle. But Wilson was unable to generate any points on his final three drives.

VIKINGS 41, DOLPHINS 18

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Dalvin Cook had a career-high 136 yards and two touchdowns on a season-high 19 carries as the Vikings re-committed themselves to running the ball.

Latavius Murray added 68 rushing yards and a score on 15 of the team's season-high 40 attempts. The Vikings (7-6-1) converted each of their first three drives under interim offensive coordinator Kevin Stefanski into touchdowns before turning the game over to the defense. Anthony Barr and Danielle Hunter each had two of the nine sacks of Ryan Tannehill, totaling 71 lost yards for the Dolphins (7-7). Miami came crashing down from the euphoria of defeating New England with that double-lateral 69-yard score on the final play last week.

Minkah Fitzpatrick returned an interception 50 yards for a touchdown in the second quarter and Kalen Ballage scored on a 75-yard run on the first snap of the second half to bring the Dolphins within 21-17. But on their next five possessions they netted a staggering minus-27 yards on 16 plays.

Though Chicago won the NFC North by beating Green Bay, the Vikings moved a critical step closer to returning to the postseason. With enough help, they could clinch the second wild-card spot next week.

TITANS 17, GIANTS 0

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP) — Bruising halfback Derrick Henry had his second straight big game with a career-high 33 carries for 170 yards rushing and two touchdowns. □

Simmons, Embiid lead 76ers past Cavs in Butler's return

By The Associated Press
CLEVELAND (AP) — Ben Simmons had 22 points, 11 rebounds and 14 assists for his third triple-double of the season, Joel Embiid scored 24 points and the Philadelphia 76ers won in Jimmy Butler's return, routing Cleveland Cavaliers 128-105 on Sunday.

Butler scored 19 points after missing two games — both losses — with a strained groin.

Landry Shamet added 16 points for Philadelphia, J.J. Redick had 14 points and Wilson Chandler 11.

Cedi Osman and Jordan Clarkson each scored 18 points for Cleveland. Rodney Hood and Matthew Dellavedova each had 13 points, and rookie point guard Collin Sexton added 12.

Philadelphia broke it open after Cleveland cut a 13-point lead to 86-85 late in the third quarter.

The Sixers led 86-73 midway through the quarter, but Cleveland scored 12 straight points and trailed by one on after Larry Nance Jr.'s dunk. Wilson Chandler hit a 3-pointer from the corner as time ran out in the period, starting the deciding run.

WIZARDS 128, LAKERS 110
WASHINGTON (AP) — Amid all of his team's losses and infighting and roster flux, John Wall showed just how well he's capable of playing, producing 40 points and 14 assists to lead Washington past a sluggish LeBron James and Los Angeles. A day after he and Lonzo Ball each registered a triple-double in a win at Charlotte, James was limited to a season-low 13 points, along with six rebounds and three assists, while making just five of 16 shots. The four-time NBA MVP sat out the fourth quarter.

The Wizards emphatically ended a four-game losing streak, going up by as many as 18 in the first quarter and 27 in the third.

The Lakers opened Sunday's game by going 5 for 19, 0 for 8 on 3s. Washington, meanwhile, made its

first five shots and 13 of its first 18, taking a 26-8 lead on Wall's layup.

NUGGETS 95, RAPTORS 86
DENVER (AP) — Nikola Jokic scored 26 points, Jamal Murray had 15 of his 19 in the fourth quarter and banged-up Denver rallied past equally banged-up Toronto in a contest between conference leaders. Trailing 70-57 in the third quarter, the Nuggets went on a 23-2 run to send them to their 10th win in 12 games and retain a slim lead over Golden State in the Western Conference. This marks the latest the Nuggets (20-9) have been in first place in the West since Dec. 18, 1984, according to information by Elias Sports Bureau.

Kawhi Leonard had 29 points and 14 rebounds for the Eastern Conference-leading Raptors, who finished 2-2 on their trip. They still own the league's best mark at 23-9.

Murray led the charge with eight straight points early in the fourth. The defense stepped up, too, as the Raptors didn't score their first field goal in the final quarter until Leonard's dunk with 7:42 remaining.

HEAT 102, PELICANS 96
NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Josh Richardson scored 22 points, Dwyane Wade added 19 in what was likely his final game in New Orleans, and Miami beat the Pelicans.

Hassan Whiteside had 17 points and 12 rebounds in his matchup with Anthony Davis.

Davis had 27 points, 12 rebounds, three blocks and three steals, but curiously did not take his first shot of the second half until hitting a 3-pointer with 5:43 left in the fourth quarter.

KINGS 120, MAVERICKS 113
DALLAS (AP) — Buddy Hield and De'Aaron Fox each scored 28 points and Sacramento ended Dallas' 11-game home winning streak.

The Kings also spoiled the return of Dirk Nowitzki to the American Airlines Center. The 21-year veteran played



Philadelphia 76ers' Joel Embiid (21), from Cameroon, shoots against Cleveland Cavaliers' Larry Nance Jr. (22), David Nwaba (12), and Jaron Blossomgame (4) during the second half of an NBA basketball game Sunday, Dec. 16, 2018, in Cleveland.

Associated Press

his first home game after missing the first 26 games of the season while recovering from ankle surgery. He played six minutes at Phoenix on Thursday and scored three points in eight minutes Sunday.

Sacramento led for the entire second half, closing the third quarter on an 11-4 run to lead 93-83.

Luka Doncic had 28 points and nine assists, but no other Dallas player scored more than 15. DeAndre Jordan tied his season high with 23 rebounds but Dallas was hampered by poor 3-point shooting, making only 9 of 35 (26 percent).

PACERS 110, KNICKS 99

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Victor Oladipo scored 26 points, Myles Turner had 24 and Indiana beat New York for its seventh straight victory.

Oladipo added eight rebounds and seven assists, while Turner finished with six rebounds and two blocks. He also halted the Knicks' momentum on a fast break in the fourth quarter, sprinting across the court to disrupt Emmanuel Mudiay's layup attempt that would have cut the Pacers' lead to four points late in the game.

Enes Kanter finished with 20 points and 15 rebounds for the Knicks. Tim Hardaway

Jr. scored 19 points and Mudiay finished with 18.

NETS 144, HAWKS 127
NEW YORK (AP) — D'Angelo Russell scored 32 points, Rondae Hollis-Jefferson had 18 and Brooklyn beat Atlanta for its fifth straight victory.

Joe Harris had 16 points and Spencer Dinwiddie added 15. The Nets have won five straight for the first time since March 25-April 2, 2015.

John Collins scored 29 points and Dewayne Dedmon had 24 points and 12 rebounds for the Hawks. The have lost three straight and seven of eight. □

Alex Tuch scores in OT, Golden Knights top Rangers 4-3

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Alex Tuch buried a sharp-angled shot just over two minutes into overtime, giving the Vegas Golden Knights a 4-3 victory over the New York Rangers on Sunday.

Marc-Andre Fleury stopped 27 shots in his 423rd career victory, which moved him into a tie with Tony Esposito for ninth on the NHL's wins list.

Paul Stastny, Reilly Smith and William Carrier scored for Vegas, which extended its points streak to four straight games.

Chris Kreider, Brady Skjei and Mika Zibanejad scored for the Rangers, and Kevin Hayes had three assists. Henrik Lundqvist made 37 saves as New York dropped its third consecutive home game, all after regulation.

FLAMES 7, BLUES 2

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Johnny Gaudreau and Alan Quine each scored twice, and Calgary beat St. Louis.

The Flames have won eight of nine and lead the Western Conference with 46 points. Matthew Tkachuk, Elias Lindholm and Mark Giordano also scored, and David Rittich made 26 saves.

Calgary scored four times on its first 15 shots in the



Vegas Golden Knights' Reilly Smith, (19) center, scores a goal during the first period of an NHL hockey game against the New York Rangers, Sunday, Dec. 16, 2018, in New York.

Associated Press

opening period and cruised to improve to 12-2-1 in its past 15. Oskar Sundqvist and Tyler Bozak scored for St. Louis, which was trying for its first three-game winning streak of the season.

JETS 5, LIGHTNING 4, OT
WINNIPEG, Manitoba (AP) — Mark Scheifele scored 4:18 into overtime to lift Winnipeg over league-leading Tampa Bay for its season-high fifth straight win.

Patrik Laine skated in front

of Lightning goalie Andrei Vasilevskiy and lost the puck while Scheifele swooped in and cleaned up the rebound for Winnipeg's third straight overtime win. Scheifele also had two assists, and the Jets tied for second in the NHL with Calgary. Nikolaj Ehlers scored twice, and Mathieu Perreault and Brandon Tanev also scored for the Jets.

Steven Stamkos had a goal and an assist for the Light-

ning. Nikita Kucherov, Alex Killorn and Tyler Johnson also scored.

SABRES 4, BRUINS 2

BOSTON (AP) — Jeff Skinner tucked the winning goal past Tuukka Rask with 3:13 remaining for his second score of the night, and Buffalo beat Boston.

Skinner's team-leading 24th goal came off a feed behind the net from Jack Eichel, who had two goals and two assists in his return

to Boston. Eichel grew up in nearby North Chelmsford and starred at Boston University.

Eichel added an empty-net goal with 24.2 seconds left. Linus Ullmark had 35 saves for the Sabres (20-9-5), who had lost six of eight.

Steven Kampfer and Torey Krug scored and Rask made 23 saves for Boston (17-12-4).

SHARKS 7, BLACKHAWKS 3

CHICAGO (AP) — Melker Karlsson, Evander Kane, Kevin Labanc, Tomas Hertl and Logan Couture each had a goal and an assist, and San Jose rallied for its fourth straight win.

Marcus Sorensen and Barclay Goodrow also scored for the Sharks, who connected for three straight goals in the second period to take charge. Brent Burns had three assists for San Jose, which has won six of seven and climbed into a tie with Anaheim for second in the Pacific Division. Chicago goalie Corey Crawford left the game with 1:30 left in the first period after the back of his head struck the right post during a goalmouth pileup. He allowed two goals on eight shots and exited with the Blackhawks leading 3-2. □

MLS shortens season by month, goes to all-knockout playoffs



In this May 29, 2018, file photo, Major League Soccer commissioner Don Garber speaks during an event to announce the addition of FC Cincinnati as an expansion team, in Cincinnati.

Associated Press

By ANNE M. PETERSON

AP Sports Writer

Major League Soccer is shortening its season by a month, going to single-

elimination playoffs and scheduling the 2019 MLS Cup final for Nov. 10 in its earliest finish since 2002.

The league announced the

change Monday and will have an all-knockout post-season in place of a two-leg format for the conference semifinals and finals. MLS had started using a two-leg, total-goals format in 2003.

After then-U.S. coach Jurgen Klinsmann criticized the league's season as being too short, MLS stretched its schedule into December each year starting in 2012. Klinsmann was fired in November 2016.

"The big challenge is for MLS overall, how can they stretch that season into a format that is kind of competitive with the rest of the world?" Klinsmann said in 2011. "Right now it's not competitive. If you have a seven-, eight-month sea-

son, that's not competitive with the rest of the world." MLS says the new format will reward teams with top regular seasons with greater home-field advantage. The league expands to 24 teams with the addition of Cincinnati next year, and 14 teams will make the playoffs. Each of the two conference winners will get first-round byes and be joined in the conference semifinals by the winners of the three first-round series.

The league will finish before the November international break — and before the start of the 2022 World Cup in Qatar that Nov. 21. The October break will be between the end of the regular season and the start of the playoffs.

Opening day will be March 2 next year, and the regular season will end Oct. 6.

The league said the changes resulted from discussions throughout the year with team owners, general managers, television partners and other officials. The changes were ratified last week. "The idea here is to continually work on making the regular season become more and more important, so winning in March is as important as winning in September or October," MLS Commissioner Don Garber said this month. "Our playoff format, the one that we're evaluating, I think is really going to place a very, very high emphasis, strong emphasis, on the regular season." □

Familia preferred to return to Mets, who also add OF Davis

NEW YORK (AP) — Jeury's Familia would rather be a setup man for the New York Mets than a closer for someone else.

Familia had 123 saves for the Mets, who traded him to Oakland last July. He instructed agents Sam and Seth Levinson to pursue any possibility to return to the Mets.

"Honestly, that was my goal, be back with the Mets," Familia said during a conference call Monday, three days after his \$30 million, three-year contract was finalized.

New York recently acquired 2018 big league saves leader Edwin Diaz from Seattle along with All-Star second baseman Robinson Cano. Because of that, Familia will return in a different role.

"I want to pitch whatever innings they want to put me in the game," Familia said. "He's one of the best relievers in the game, the best closer. It's going to be fun."

New York also announced Monday that it had agreed to a minor league contract with 38-year-old outfielder Rajai Davis, who will report to major league spring training. The Mets also called a news conference for Tuesday to introduce catcher Wilson Ramos, who finalized a \$19 million, two-



In this May 18, 2018, file photo, New York Mets pitcher Jeury's Familia (27) delivers against the Arizona Diamondbacks during the ninth inning of a baseball game in New York.

Associated Press

year contract. He receives a \$2 million signing bonus payable next July 1, \$6.25 million in 2019 and \$9.25 million in 2020. The Mets have a \$10 million option for 2021 with a \$1.5 million buyout. Ramos would earn a \$500,000 bonus in each season he has 100 starts at

catcher. Familia gets a \$2 million signing bonus payable on equal installments on July 1 and Dec. 10 next year. He has salaries of \$6 million in 2019 and \$11 million in each of the final two seasons. The Mets will defer \$1 million of his 2020 salary, payable on Jan. 15, 2022.

They will defer the same amount of his 2021 pay, payable on July 1, 2022.

He gets a \$500,000 performance bonus in any season he has 50 games finished. He would get a \$1 million assignment bonus if traded. A 29-year-old righthander, Familia said return-

ing to New York was a preference because his wife's family lives in the area.

He was 8-6 with 18 saves in 24 chances and a 3.13 ERA for the Mets and A's last season. He signed with the Mets at age 17 and had 43 saves in 2015 when New York reached the World Series. He led the majors with a franchise-record 51 saves the following year and was an All-Star, again helping New York reach the playoffs.

Familia served a 15-game suspension at the start of 2017 for violating Major League Baseball's domestic violence policy. Later that year, he had a blood clot that required surgery and finished 2-2 with a 4.38 ERA and six saves in 26 games.

Last season, he was 4-4 with a 2.88 ERA and 17 saves in 21 chances with the Mets.

Davis hit .224 with one home run, six RBIs and 21 steals in 101 games and 216 plate appearances for Cleveland. His two-run, eighth-inning homer off Ar-

oldis Chapman tied Game 7 of the 2016 World Series for Cleveland against the Chicago Cubs, a game the Indians lost in 10 innings. Davis has a .262 career average with 61 homers, 379 RBIs and 415 stolen bases in 13 major league seasons. □

AP COACH OF THE YEAR

Continued from Page 17

As he did in 2012, Kelly has guided the Fighting Irish to a 12-0 season and a chance to compete for the national championship. Notre Dame played Alabama in the BCS championship game after the 2012 season and lost 42-14. The third-ranked Irish will face No. 2 Clemson in the Cotton Bowl on Dec. 29 in their first College Football Playoff appearance.

This undefeated season for Notre Dame seems very different than that one and it comes just two seasons after Notre Dame finished 4-8. Kelly overhauled his staff and his approach after that debacle, bringing in new coordinators on both sides of the ball. He made a concerted effort

to be more involved with all aspects of the team.

"I think I'm a better leader of our program," Kelly told AP. "The organization has gotten so much bigger. The ability to create the right energy and day-to-day culture is difficult. I think I've gotten a lot better a leading that large group on a day-to-day basis."

Kelly is 81-34 in nine seasons at Notre Dame and he credited his players for helping him improve as a coach.

"Sitting them down and listening to them is similar to any good business or CEO sitting down and listening to his employees and getting feedback from them as well. I think where I made some real strides was spending more time with our players and get-

ting feedback from them," Kelly said.

The Irish rebounded to 10-3 last season and entered this season with similar expectations. After a 3-0 start, Kelly made the pivotal move of switching quarterback from senior Brandon Wimbush to junior Ian Book.

While the move might have seemed bold at the time, it wasn't necessarily to Kelly.

"It felt like the right thing to do," Kelly said. "You know where it felt risky was the first quarter of Wake Forest when we weren't moving the ball effectively. But at the time in making the decision I didn't feel risky. It felt like it was the right thing to do based on the information that I had. Clearly if you don't play well the next



In this April 21, 2018, file photo, Notre Dame head coach Brian Kelly watches during the Notre Dame Blue-Gold Spring college football game in South Bend, Ind.

Associated Press

week and things don't go well it becomes an issue. Not only risky, but could become a huge problem." The Irish offense took off. Matched with a solid defense, Notre Dame completed a perfect regular season. Kentucky's Mark

Stoops, UAB's Bill Clark and Oklahoma's Lincoln Riley each received three first-place votes. Clemson's Dabo Swinney, Army's Jeff Monken, Northwestern's Pat Fitzgerald and Florida's Dan Mullen each received one. □

Key takeaways from new reports on Russian disinformation

By **MATT O'BRIEN** and **BARBARA ORTUTAY**

AP Technology Writers

Russians seeking to influence U.S. elections through social media had their eyes on Instagram and the black community.

These were among the findings in two reports released Monday by the Senate intelligence committee. Separate studies from University of Oxford researchers and the cybersecurity firm New Knowledge reveal insights into how Russian agents sought to influence Americans by saturating their favorite online services and apps with hidden propaganda.

Here are the highlights:

INSTAGRAM'S "MEME WARFARE"

Both reports show that misinformation on Facebook's Instagram may have had broader reach than the interference on Facebook itself.

The New Knowledge study says that since 2015, the Instagram posts generated 187 million engagements, such as comments or likes, compared with 77 million on Facebook.



Former FBI Director James Comey speaks to reporters on Capitol Hill Washington, Monday, Dec. 17, 2018, after a second closed-door interview with two Republican-led committees investigating what they say was bias at the Justice Department before the 2016 presidential election.

And the barrage of image-centric Instagram "memes" has only grown since the 2016 election. Russian agents shifted their focus to Instagram after the public last year became aware of the widespread manipulation on Facebook and Twitter.

NOT JUST ADS

Revelations last year that

Russian agents used rubles to pay for some of their propaganda ads drew attention to how gullible tech companies were in allowing their services to be manipulated. But neither ads nor automated "bots" were as effective as unpaid posts hand-crafted by human agents pretending to be Americans. Such

posts were more likely to be shared and commented on, and they rose in volume during key dates in U.S. politics such as during the presidential debates in 2016 or after the Obama administration's post-election announcement that it would investigate Russian hacking.

"These personalized mes-

sages exposed U.S. users to a wide range of disinformation and junk news linked to on external websites, including content designed to elicit outrage and cynicism," says the report by Oxford researchers, who worked with social media analysis firm Graphika.

DEMOGRAPHIC TARGETING

Both reports found that Russian agents tried to polarize Americans in part by targeting African-American communities extensively. They did so by campaigning for black voters to boycott elections or follow the wrong voting procedures in 2016, according to the Oxford report.

The New Knowledge report added that agents were "developing Black audiences and recruiting Black Americans as assets" beyond how they were targeting either left- or right-leaning voters.

The reports also support previous findings that the influence operations sought to polarize Americans by sowing political divisions on issues such as immigration and cultural and religious identities. □



Technicians stand next to the Spacell lunar module, an unmanned spacecraft, is on display in a special "clean room" where the space craft is being developed, during a press tour of their facility near Tel Aviv, Israel, Monday, Dec. 17, 2018.

Associated Press

By **ISABEL DEBRE**
Associated Press

YEHUD, Israel (AP) — An Israeli nonprofit on Monday said it has pushed back the launch of what it hopes will be the first private spacecraft to land on the moon until February.

Officials from Spacell and its project partner, the state-owned Israel Aerospace Industries, an-

nounced that the landing craft, dubbed "Beresheet," or Genesis, will ship in February to Florida.

Propelled by a SpaceX Falcon rocket launch, the robotic lander will then commence its months-long voyage to the moon. It had been slated to launch this month.

Spacell said it had no control over the launch's de-

First private Israeli lunar mission will launch in Feb.

lay, and that SpaceX, the private space exploration company founded by entrepreneur Elon Musk, notified them that its rocket will now lift off in February 2019 without providing an explanation.

Israel Aerospace Industries manager Opher Doron stressed that the small craft, roughly the size of a washing machine, faces a "difficult, arduous journey" because it will have to make several orbits before touching down on the moon. Upon landing, the craft is to relay photographs and collect data about the moon's ever-changing magnetism for research by Israel's Weizmann Institute and NASA. On Monday, Spacell representatives presented a

time capsule that will accompany the spacecraft to the moon.

The capsule, in the shape of a DVD, holds pictures of the Israeli public, interpretive drawings by Israeli children and other pieces of national memorabilia, including stories of Holocaust survivors.

"We hope that far in the future, when travel to the moon is as common as trans-Atlantic travel, that children will be able to understand the lives of their Israeli ancestors through this archive on the moon," said Spacell co-founder Yonatan Winetraub.

A crowd of Israeli reporters, clad in sanitized white coats, burst into applause as Winetraub fastened the capsule to the underbelly

of the craft.

Spacell was founded in 2011 and originally vied for Google's Lunar Xprize, which challenged private companies to try to land an unmanned spacecraft on the moon.

But the \$20 million competition was scrapped by the tech giant earlier this year when it became clear none of the five companies would meet a March deadline.

Spacell has vowed to continue the mission and hopes that its ambitious \$95 million project, largely funded by South African-Israeli billionaire Morris Kahn and other donors, will spur a new wave of commercial missions to the moon and jump-start new companies. □



\$ 265,000.00
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3Bedr w/ additional
guest studio



\$ 355,000.00
Caya Ritmo # 35
4 Bedr 2 Story Home
Eagle Beach area



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& large private pool



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Oceania Residence # 513
2Bed/2Bath Ocean front
Penthouse condo w/ jacuzzi



Liz Weston: You don't have to live by these money myths

By LIZ WESTON
Associated Press

We're told experiences are supposed to make us happier than stuff — turns out that may apply mostly to the affluent. The famous marshmallow test that predicts future success, based on which kids can resist an immediate treat? That research has similar problems. Meanwhile, the jury's still out on whether willpower is something you can "use up."

Studies about these issues shaped a fair amount of personal finance advice in recent years. The fact that researchers may have drawn incorrect or at least incomplete conclusions reminds us that blanket advice on money is risky. What works for one person may not work for the next, particularly if their financial lives are vastly different.

MYTH 1: EXPERIENCES BRING MORE HAPPINESS

Many studies have found people get more happiness from spending on experiences than buying material things. The 2003 study that kicked off all this research, however, revealed some socioeconomic differences: People's preference for experiences wasn't universal and rose with income. Until recently, those differences hadn't been further explored by researchers. Wendy Wood, professor of psychology and business at the University of Southern California, suspected



This April 2017 file photo provided by NerdWallet shows Liz Weston, a columnist for personal finance website NerdWallet.com.

bias: After all, the people doing the research and the journalists writing about it tended to be middle-class or higher.

So she and two of her graduate students, Jacob C. Lee and Deborah L. Hall, examined 23 studies and conducted three of their own focusing on socioeconomic background. Their findings echoed the original study, showing that people with less education and income were happier after purchasing material

goods or were equally happy about how they spent their money, whether on things or experiences.

Wood is now researching why this is true, but points to theories that people of higher socioeconomic status tend to be more focused on self-development, while those with fewer resources focus more on getting their money's worth.

"If you have a restricted budget and you can only spend a small amount of money, then each pur-

chase has to be really worthwhile," says Wood.

MYTH 2: MARSHMALLOWS PREDICT FUTURE SUCCESS

The famous "marshmallow test" put a treat in front of preschoolers and promised that if they didn't eat it, they could have two treats after 15 minutes. Researchers found that preschoolers' ability to put off eating the marshmallow correlated with academic performance and better stress management when they were older.

Personal finance types love this research, because it highlights the importance of delayed gratification. Putting off spending today in favor of investing for tomorrow is a key to building wealth.

A study published earlier this year, however, found a much smaller correlation between delayed marshmallow consumption and future success — and most of that was explained by a child's background.

"Socioeconomic status was heavily tied to one's ability to delay gratification," says Tyler W. Watts, assistant professor of research at New York University's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development. "It's easier to delay gratification if your basic needs are met and if you have financial security."

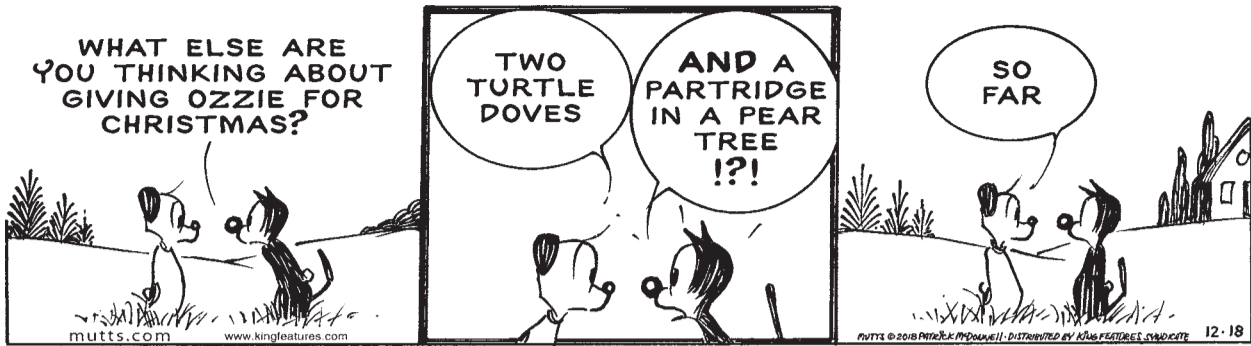
MYTH 3: WILLPOWER IS A LIMITED RESOURCE

Since 1998, researchers have been finding that our self-control is a limited resource that can be exhausted, a process known as "ego depletion." □

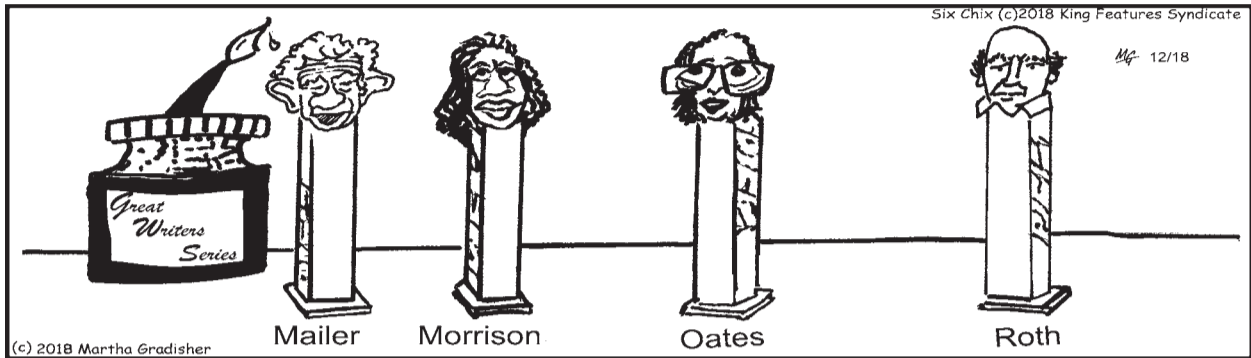
Associated Press

Artistic
L.G. Smith Blvd. 90-92
(across the Cruise Harbor)
Table-Linens
Porcelain, Watches
Only Specials on Gold
& Silver Jewelry
Free Gift

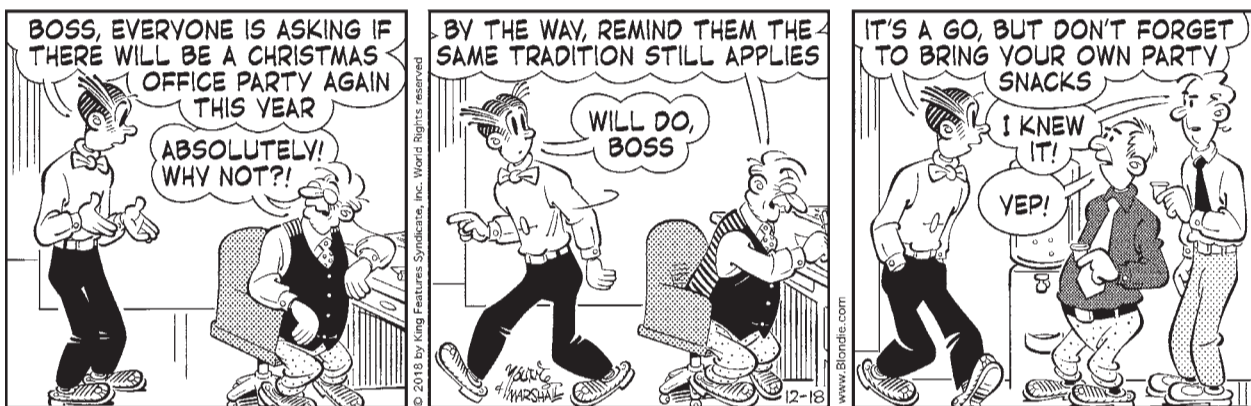
Mutts



6 Chix



Blondie



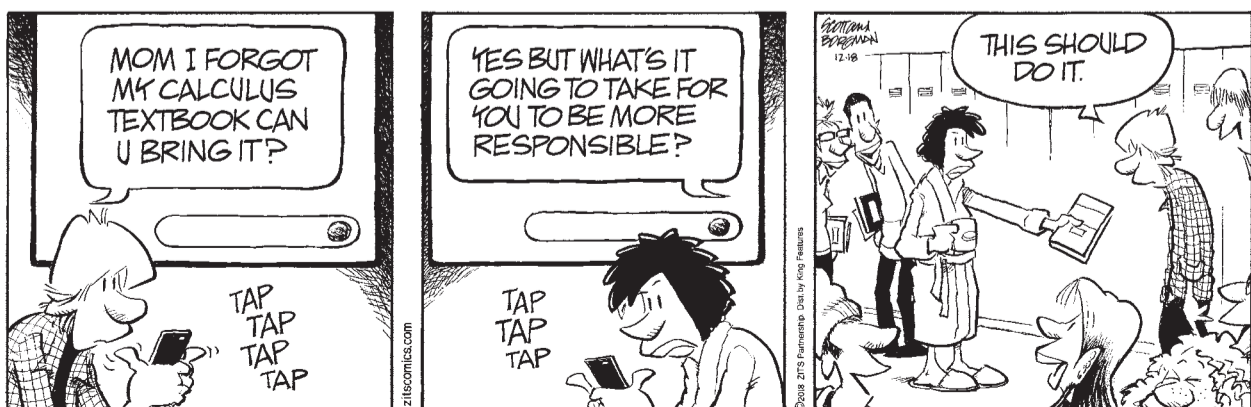
Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

			7		3			
	1	4				3	8	
	9		1		6		4	
9		5				1		4
6		2				7		9
	4		6		9		5	
	6	7				4	9	
			4		5			

Difficulty Level ★★

12/18

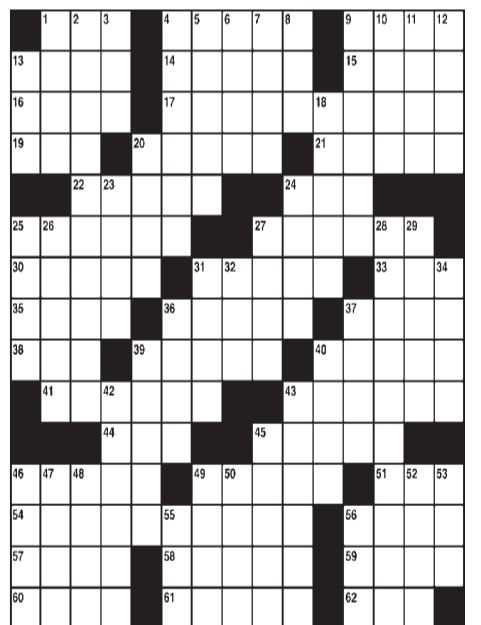
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

4	9	1	7	5	8	3	2	6
5	7	2	6	3	9	4	8	1
6	3	8	1	2	4	7	9	5
9	2	5	4	7	3	6	1	8
3	8	7	2	1	6	5	4	9
1	4	6	8	9	5	2	3	7
7	6	9	3	4	1	8	5	2
2	1	3	5	8	7	9	6	4
8	5	4	9	6	2	1	7	3

ACROSS

- Mrs. Nixon
 - Seizes
 - of the Apostles; biblical book
 - Dry riverbed
 - Fit for a king
 - Opposite of "Giddyup!"
 - Bee colony
 - The whole kit and caboodle
 - Late bedtime
 - DVD remote button
 - Wash off soapsuds
 - Lasso's end
 - Friend
 - Grow up
 - Firstborn of several
 - Mistreat
 - Rascal
 - Presidential nickname
 - Harbor town
 - Hunger pains
 - Nylons
 - Johnny Cash's "A Boy Named "
 - Heroic tales
 - Disastrous defeats
 - Sleeplike state
 - Head covering
 - for tat
 - Obsolete
 - Ice cream server
 - British fellow
 - Steal from
 - Pen name
 - Boyfriend
 - Gung ho
 - Hole maker
 - BPOE folks
 - Understands
 - Peniless
 - Suffix for prior or count
- ## DOWN
- Gout symptom
 - Swashbuckler
 - Man's accessory
 - Travolta/Newton-John musical



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

12/18/18

Monday's Puzzle Solved

HAUL	BARK	SHOP
OWNER	UPON	TUNE
MARGE	ORDINANCE	
EYE	TRY	TITTER
ALIAS	TEE	
MODERN	PICNIC	
IRATE	SHINE	MOO
NABS	SLANG	SPAN
ILL	CHASE	LOOSE
SECRET	ROASTS	
HAL	PAIRS	
ACCEPT	APT	IDO
COUNSELOR	EBBED	
TOBE	ROUT	RULED
SLAY	SPRY	MEDS

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12/18/18

- Shoot from hiding
- Learn by ; memorize
- Disagreeing
- Pleasant-smelling shop
- Like a capitol roof
- Unexpected obstacle
- Sheltered bay
- Exclude
- "Skies"; Irving Berlin song
- Sled race
- Acorn droppers
- Student transport
- "Peter "
- Stinger

Classifieds

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Aruba Divi Phoenix

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770
33 weeks remain \$28 ,000 Each
Studio wk #50 14th floor
Penthouse with 35 weeks
remain On the contract \$6,500

Divi Village

Studio WK # 47 and 48 Room
7201
25 week remain \$6500 Each
1 BR WK 50 Room # 3208
Building C 17 weeks remain
\$6500

Divi Village

1 BR WK # 52 Room # 3308
25 weeks remain \$12,000
1 BR WK # 1 Room # 5501
24 weeks remain \$ 11,000

Divi Village

Studio WK # 52 Room # 6304
20 weeks remain \$ 9000
Studio WK # 1 Room# 8201
23 weeks remain 8 accelrated
\$8000

Paradise Beach Villas

Wk 1 and 2 Room # 222
Pool/Ocean View \$ 11,000 each
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Most teen drug use is down, but officials fret vaping boom

By MIKE STOBBE

NEW YORK (AP) — Twice as many high school students used nicotine-tinged electronic cigarettes this year compared with last year, an unprecedented jump in a large annual survey of teen smoking, drinking and drug use.

It was the largest single-year increase in the survey's 44-year history, far surpassing a mid-1970s surge in marijuana smoking.

The findings, released Monday, echo those of a government survey earlier this year. That survey also found a dramatic rise in vaping among children and prompted federal regulators to press for measures that make it harder for kids to get them.

Experts attribute the jump to newer versions of e-cigarettes, like those by Juul Labs Inc. that resemble computer flash drives and can be used discreetly.

Trina Hale, a junior at South Charleston High School in West Virginia, said vaping — specifically Juul — exploded at her school this year.

"They can put it in their sleeve or their pocket. They can do it wherever, when-



In this April 11, 2018 file photo, a high school student uses a vaping device near a school campus in Cambridge, Mass.

Associated Press

ever. They can do it in class if they're sneaky about it," she said.

Olivia Turman, a freshman at Cabell Midland High School in Ona, West Virginia, said she too has seen kids "hit their vape in class." The federally funded survey released Monday is conducted by University of Michigan researchers and has been operating since 1975. This year's findings

are based on responses from about 45,000 students in grades 8, 10 and 12 in schools across the country. It found 1 in 5 high school seniors reported having vaped nicotine in the previous month.

After vaping and alcohol, the most common thing teens use is marijuana, the survey found. About 1 in 4 students said they'd used marijuana at least once in

the past year. It was more common in older kids — about 1 in 17 high school seniors said they use marijuana every day.

Overall, marijuana smoking is about the same level as it was the past few years. Vaping of marijuana rose, however.

More teens, however, are saying no to lots of other substances. Usage of alcohol, cigarettes, cocaine,

LSD, ecstasy, heroin and opioid pills all declined.

Experts say it's not clear what's behind those trends, especially since the nation is in the midst of the deadliest drug overdose epidemic ever.

"What is it that we're doing right with teenagers that we're not doing with adults?" said Dr. Nora Volkow, director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, a federal agency that funds the Michigan study.

One leading theory is that kids today are staying home and communicating on smartphones rather than hanging out and smoking, drinking or trying drugs.

"Drug experimentation is a group activity," Volkow said. What about vaping?

"Vaping mostly is an individual activity," said David Jernigan, a Boston University researcher who tracks alcohol use.

The vaping explosion is a big worry, however. Health officials say nicotine is harmful to developing brains. Some researchers also believe vaping will make kids more likely to take up cigarettes, and perhaps later try other drugs. □



This image provided by the Carnegie Institution for Science shows an artist's concept of a dwarf planet that astronomers say is the farthest known object in our solar system, which they have nicknamed "Farout."

Associated Press

Farout: Scientists spot solar system's farthest known object

By MARCIA DUNN

AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.

(AP) — Astronomers have spotted the farthest known object in our solar system — and they've nicknamed the pink cosmic body "Farout."

The International Astronomical Union's Minor Planet Center announced the discovery Monday.

"Farout" is about 120 astronomical units away — that's 120 times the distance between Earth and the sun, or 11 billion miles. The previous record-holder was the dwarf planet Eris at 96 astronomical units. Pluto, by comparison, is 34 astronomical units away.

The Carnegie Institution's

Scott Sheppard said the object is so far away and moving so slowly it will take a few years to determine its orbit. At that distance, it could take more than 1,000 years to orbit the sun.

Sheppard and his team spied the dwarf planet in November using a telescope in Hawaii. Their finding was confirmed by a telescope in Chile.

"I actually uttered 'farout' when I first found this object, because I immediately noticed from its slow movement that it must be far out there," Sheppard wrote in an email. "It is the slowest moving object I have ever seen and is really out there."

It is an estimated 310 miles

(500 kilometers) across and believed to be round. Its pink shade indicates an ice-rich object. Little else is known.

The discovery came about as the astronomers were searching for the hypothetical Planet X, a massive planet believed by some to be orbiting the sun from vast distances, well beyond Pluto. □

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Philippines' Catriona Gray named Miss Universe 2018

Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — The Philippines' Catriona Gray was named Miss Universe 2018 in a competition held in Bangkok on Monday, besting contestants from 93 other countries and delighting her home nation.

Gray wore a sparkling red dress that she said was inspired by a volcano in the Philippines as she was handed the crown to the delight of a roaring crowd in the Thai capital that generally favored Southeast Asian contestants.

The 24-year-old singer and model said she wore red because "when I was 13, my mom said she had a dream that I would win Miss Universe in a red dress." She said her mom cried when they saw each other after she won the competition, the 67th Miss Universe pageant. Gray edged out first runner-up Tamaryn Green of South Africa and third-place Sthefany Gutierrez of Venezuela. She succeeds Demi-Leigh Nel-Peters of South Africa. In the Philippines, pageants are a popular attraction, and Gray's countrymen watching the



Catriona Gray of the Philippines waves to the audience after being crowned the new Miss Universe 2018 during the final round of the 67th Miss Universe competition in Bangkok, Thailand, Monday, Dec. 17, 2018.

Associated Press

televised contest cheered wildly and jumped for joy when she was declared the winner. Celebrations were especially buoyant in Oas town in the north-eastern province of Albay,

from which Gray's Filipina mother hails. According to Gray, her gown's design, with its lava color and appearance, was influenced by Albay's iconic Mayon Volcano. Gray's father is

Australian, and she was born and grew up in Cairns, Australia. She studied at the Berklee College of Music in Boston in the United States. The office of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte was

quick to congratulate the winner — the fourth Filipina to be named Miss Universe. "Ms. Gray truly made the entire Philippines proud when she sashayed on the global stage and showcased the genuine qualities defining a Filipina beauty: confidence, grace, intelligence and strength in the face of tough challenges," Duterte said in a statement from the presidential palace. "In her success, Miss Philippines has shown to the world that women in our country have the ability to turn dreams into reality through passion, diligence, determination and hard work."

An early round of questioning touched on the issue of drugs, a controversial subject in the Philippines, where Duterte's aggressive anti-drug crackdown has taken thousands of lives, many in what critics charge were extrajudicial executions. Duterte raised even more controversy when he recently joked that he smoked marijuana to deal with his busy schedule of meetings with other Asian leaders at a regional summit. □

2018 Breakthrough: Hannah Gadsby may change stand-up game

By MIKE CIDONI LENNOX

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Hannah Gadsby says she knows it's meant as a compliment to be chosen as one of the year's Breakthrough Entertainers by The Associated Press. But, as with many things, the Australian stand-up comic and actress sees the honor from a variety of perspectives.

"Like, what happens after 'breakthrough'?" Gadsby asked. "Like, I could be a one-hit wonder or I go on to being a deserved star?" She notes: "I think I was doing really well before all this craziness around 'Nanette.'" "Nanette" is the 40-year-old Gadsby's latest stage show, which debuted in 2017, and enjoyed critical and commercial successes during its runs throughout Australia, at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, in New York and Montreal.

But it wasn't until late June that the "craziness" began. That's when Netflix released a filmed version of the show, and Gadsby went from known Down Under to global phenomenon. Many critics were blown away by the way Gadsby seamlessly segued from hilarity to humanity - quickly getting deep and dark about some harrowing experiences as a lesbian and as a woman.

And while "Nanette" was written before the start of the #MeToo movement, Gadsby apparently felt it coming. In "Nanette," she takes direct aim at straight white males and sexual abuse. What Gadsby didn't expect was that so many would get her. Since 2006, she'd made a name, and a living, as a stand-up comic and actress in Australia and New Zealand. And



In this Dec. 10, 2018 photo, Australian comedian Hannah Gadsby poses for a portrait in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

while she started building a primarily gay international following in 2015, she's never experienced what happened after "Nanette" — everything from rave reviews in The New York Times to fan letters from India. In fact, Gadsby said she expected just the opposite: that her candor in "Na-

nette" would divide, not conquer, audiences.

"What the magical thing was, what I realized, was, 'Oh, a lot of people are thinking this.' And what I thought was making me a marginalized figure — you know, sort of a niche human — actually, by being completely truthful about

it, has given me the unexpected realization that I'm not at all." In "Nanette," Gadsby says she's giving up stand-up comedy. But, with the success of the stand-up special, she's now reconsidered that, noting future shows will be something closer to performance art. Just about the only thing that's certain: Gadsby won't be going Hollywood, at least for now. She said that world "would require a substantial erosion of independent thought."

So, what is next?

"Oh, the phone has been ringing," she said, with a grin. "But I'm slow. I'm a slow person. So, I need to make my decisions slowly. They say that 'slow and steady wins the race.' But I'm more like the tortoise, but with the hare's game plan. So, I'm moving as slowly as a tortoise, but napping like the hare." □

'Spider-Verse' swings to the top; 'Mortal Engines' tanks

By LINDSEY BAHR

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse" swung to the top of the domestic box office in its first weekend in theaters, proving that there is widespread audience interest in big screen animated versions of Marvel's marquee superheroes.

The film led a host of newcomers that debuted to varying success on this pre-Christmas holiday weekend, including Clint Eastwood's drug smuggling drama "The Mule" and the Peter Jackson-produced epic "Mortal Engines" which bombed in North American theaters.

"Into the Spider-Verse" earned an estimated \$35.4 million from 3,813 theaters against a \$90 million production budget according to Sony Pictures on Sunday, which is a record for animated movies in December (although the hybrid "Alvin and the Chipmunks" movies were higher). The film features an innovative animation style — both CGI and hand-drawn — and fo-



This image released by Sony Pictures Animations shows a scene from "Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse."

Associated Press

cuses on the Miles Morales character as he learns to become the famed web-slinger. It's another financial win for the studio's latest "expanded Spider-Man universe" strategy following "Venom" and "Spider-Man: Homecoming."

And "Spider-Verse" has been very well-received among critics, and audiences in exit surveys gave it a rare A+ CinemaScore — a first for a Spider-Man film. It's also been nominated for a Golden Globe award for best animated feature and picked up a few honors from critics' groups as well, including the New York Film

Critics Circle.

"We are playing to both families and fanboys. We're an all-audience film," said Adrian Smith, Sony's president of domestic distribution.

They also have an eight-day runway until the big Christmas release start packing the multiplexes. The Clint Eastwood-directed drug smuggling drama "The Mule" debuted in second place with an estimated \$17.2 million. It's a solid debut for R-rated film that cost \$50 million to produce. The Warner Bros. film drew an audience that was mostly older (78 percent

over 35-years-old) and male (54 percent).

"Clint Eastwood has such a big following as a director and a star," said Jeff Goldstein, Warner Bros. president of domestic distribution.

It's Eastwood's first major role in a film since 2012, and the studio is optimistic about the film's longevity into the holiday.

Not all the new films were so lucky, however. Coming in fifth behind holdovers "Dr. Seuss' The Grinch" and "Ralph Breaks the Internet," was the Peter Jackson-produced epic "Mortal Engines," which bombed in

North American theaters, taking in only \$7.5 million in ticket sales against a reported \$100 million production budget. MRC and Universal Pictures produced the post-apocalyptic steampunk film based on the popular Philip Reeve book, which is the first of four in a series.

Neither critics nor audiences responded favorably to the Christian Rivers-directed film, however, which has a deathly 28 percent on Rotten Tomatoes.

This weekend also saw the release of the PG-13 rated version of "Deadpool 2," "Once Upon A Deadpool," in 1,566 locations. It earned an estimated \$2.6 million, which is being added to "Deadpool 2's" box office totals.

In limited release, Barry Jenkins' James Baldwin adaptation "If Beale Street Could Talk" opened in four theaters to a very strong \$219,173. Jenkins' follow-up to "Moonlight" is expected to be a big player throughout awards season and expands nationwide in the coming weeks. □

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 AQUAMAN JASON MOMOA AMBER HEARD WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES [PG-13] MON-THU 7:50 FRI 7:50 10:45 SAT 1:00 7:50 10:45 SUN 1:00 7:50 CXC MON-FRI 3:15 10:45 9:05 SAT-SUN 3:15 10:45 9:05 TTP MON-THU 5:35 8:30 FRI 5:35 8:30 11:25 SAT 2:40 5:35 8:30 11:25 SUN 2:40 5:35 8:30	 ONCE UPON A DEADPOOL RYAN REYNOLDS JOSH BROLIN WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES [PG-13] MON-FRI 4:10 6:40 SAT-SUN 1:45 4:10 6:40
 SPIDER-MAN INTO THE SPIDER-VERSE WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES [PG] MON-FRI 4:15 6:45 SAT-SUN 1:50 4:15 6:45 SPANISH SAT-SUN 1:00	 MORTAL ENGINES [PG-13] HERA HILMAR HUGO WEAVING MON-SUN 9:10 TTP MON-THU 6:05 8:45 FRI 6:05 11:25 SAT 3:25 6:05 8:45 11:25 SUN 3:25 6:05 8:45
 RALPH BREAKS THE INTERNET JOHN C. REILLY SARAH SILVERMAN WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES [PG] MON-FRI 5:45 SAT-SUN 1:00 3:20 5:45	 CREED 2 [PG-13] MICHAEL B. JORDAN SYLVESTER STALLONE WITH SPANISH SUBTITLES [PG-13] MON-THU & SUN 8:10 FRI-SAT 8:10 10:55
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Jeff Bridges to receive Cecil B. DeMille Award at Globes



In this Nov. 19, 2010 file photo, actor Jeff Bridges poses for a portrait in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Jeff Bridges may have once been considered as one of Hollywood's most underappreciated actors, but next month's Golden Globe Awards will showcase his

life and illustrious career next month by bestowing him one of its highest honors.

Bridges will receive the Cecil B. DeMille Award during the 76th annual awards ceremony on Jan.

6, 2019, the Hollywood Foreign Press Association announced Monday. The actor been praised for starring in films including "Crazy Heart," "True Grit," "Hell or High Water" and "The Big Lebowski," which became a cult classic thanks to his nonchalant, knit-sweater wearing character Jeffrey "The Dude" Lebowski.

HFPA President Meher Tatna said in a statement the Golden Globe winner has "captured hearts and minds" of audiences worldwide.

The DeMille Award is given annually to an "individual who has made an incredible impact on the world of entertainment." Past recipients include Oprah Winfrey, Morgan Freeman, Meryl Streep, Jodie Foster, Barbra Streisand, Sidney Poitier and Lucille Ball. □

Top of mind: 'Justice' is Merriam-Webster's word of the year

By LEANNE ITALIE
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Racial justice. Obstruction of justice. Social justice. The Justice Department. Merriam-Webster has chosen "justice" as its 2018 word of the year, driven by the churning news cycle over months and months.

The word follows "toxic," picked by Oxford Dictionaries, and "misinformation," plucked by Dictionary.com. Peter Sokolowski, Merriam-Webster's editor at large, told The Associated Press ahead of Monday's announcement that "justice" consistently bubbled into the top 20 or 30 lookups on the company's website, spiking at times due to specific events but also skating close to the surface for much of the year.

While it's one of those common words people likely know how to spell and use correctly in a sentence, Sokolowski pointed to other reasons that drive search traffic. Among them is an attempt to focus a train of



In this Dec. 12, 2018, photo, "justice" is displayed in a Merriam-Webster dictionary in New York.

Associated Press

thought around a philosophical problem, or to seek aspirational motivation. Such well-known words are often among the most looked up every year, including those that are slightly abstract, including "love," he said.

The designation for "justice" came soon after President

Trump's one-time fixer, Michael Cohen, was sentenced to three years in prison for crimes that included arranging the payment of hush money to conceal his boss' alleged sexual affairs. He told a judge he agreed time and again to cover up Trump's "dirty deeds" out of "blind loyalty."

It also came ahead of a Senate vote on the "First Step Act," a criminal justice reform bill with broad bipartisan support. Earlier in the year, Kim Kardashian West not once but twice paid a White House visit on Trump to discuss prison and sentencing reform. Sentencing for drug crimes, treatment

for opioid addiction, a loosening of cannabis laws, a Tesla probe, the Mueller investigation into the Trump campaign: Justice will remain top of mind into the new year.

"These are stories that connect to the culture and to society across races, across classes," Sokolowski said. "We get this word that filters in."

That includes Twitter in a big way.

Often, when Trump tweets about the Department of Justice, he uses simply "Justice." On Aug. 1, when he tweeted his wish for then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions to stop the Mueller investigation, searches spiked significantly. Trump referred to "obstruction of justice," a separate entry on the Merriam-Webster site, prompting a lookup increase of 900 percent over the same date the year before.

The word "justice" comes from Latin, unlike a lot of the more emotional words that rose in Old English. □

Toni Braxton is in the holiday spirit with Lifetime movie

By GARY GERARD HAMILTON

NEW YORK (AP) — Toni Braxton has been nominated for Grammys again for her latest album, but these days the singer is also focusing on acting — and flexing her producing muscles.

"I find that I really love everything about film and film-making," the multiplatinum-singer said in a recent interview. "I just really love movies, whether TV or anything that's dealing with film."

Braxton, a seven-time Grammy winner nominated for three more Grammys earlier this month for her latest album "Sex & Cigarettes," is currently starring in "Every Day Is Christmas" on Lifetime. Inspired by the Charles Dickens classic, "A Christmas Carol," the movie centers around Alexis Taylor, played by Braxton, as she gets the holiday visit of a lifetime. ("Every Day Is Christmas" is re-airing on Lifetime on Saturday and



This Nov. 12, 2018 photo shows actress and singer Toni Braxton in New York. The 51-year-old singer, whose 1996 album "Secrets" has gone platinum, continues to create music but is trying a different artistic medium, acting.

Associated Press

on Christmas Day.) A self-proclaimed workaholic who "humbugs" love, Alexis ends up embracing

the spirit of Christmas when her past, present, and future collide, forcing her to risk the one thing money

can't buy: her heart. "I love Christmas movies," she said. "Holiday time makes me feel happy and

festive and excited. I got a three-picture deal at Lifetime and I thought a Christmas movie would be the perfect way to come out and introduce it."

But not only is she working hard in front of the camera, she's putting in sweat equity behind it. Braxton serves as an executive producer on the movie. She said she got "a little taste" of executive producing over the years "but now that I've bitten the apple, I want the whole thing."

Braxton's first film role was in 2001's "Kingdom Come." Since then, she's starred in several TV movies, including her own biopic, 2016's "Toni Braxton: Un-Break My Heart" and "Faith Under Fire" which premiered earlier this year.

But longtime fans shouldn't be worried that Toni is swapping her music for movies. Why? "Because love it so much," Braxton exclaimed. "It's my favorite thing to do — performing." □

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